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ABSTRACT

A panel of university based consultants examined the admissions process of New York City Public High schools in order to make recommendations that would increase access to programs and schools for all populations without reducing school effectiveness. The six sections of the report include: (1) perceptions of the problems and rationales; (2) new policy and procedures; (3) student choices; (4) matching choices and schools; (5) making choices meaningful: school continuity and coherence; and (6) assessing and managing the system. Among the recommendations are the following: (1) a student assignment system to promote professional collaboration; (2) collaboration among schools within program clusters; (3) school performance accountability referenced both to individual schools and to the team of schools that form a cluster; (4) development of admission criteria and mechanisms within clusters; (5) a new formula for assigning students to educational option schools and programs that balances equitable access with improvement of instructional activities; (7) continued Board support for the development of educational programs of choice in all schools combined with a moratorium on the development of educational option schools; (8) no screened programs; (9) entry into school programs regardless of residence; (10) integrated processes for collecting information, making decisions, and notifying students; (11) the development of quality control procedures; and (12) monitoring the composition of entering classes. (ETS)

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HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLING

A REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY CONSULTANTS

SPRING, 1986

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Executive Summary of the Consultants' Report on High School Admission	3
Section I Perceptions of the Problems and Rationales	9
Student and Parent Perception of the Admission Process	9
A Point of View: Rationales for Assigning Students	14
The Function of Assignment Systems	15
Summary Statement on Educational Policy	16
Judging Assignment Systems: A Sense of Need	18
A Review of Existing Rationales for Assigning Students	19
Student Assignment and Racial Integration	22
Performance Accountability, School Leadership, and School Admission	27
Concluding Statement: Balancing Interests	32
Section II New Policy and Procedures	34
Choice Processes and Selection: A Need For Balance	34
Educational Option Schools and Programs: Assignment Formula	36
Criteria for Screend Programs: A Collaboration Procedure	40
Eliminating Bias and/or Invalid Mechanisms	41
Establishing Screening Criteria and Mechanisms: A Programmatic Structure and A Collaborative Process	43
Program Structure: Clusters of Interest	47
Heterogeneity and School Types	50
Structure for Collaboration: Program Areas and School Types	52
Section III Student Choices	57
Assuring Access and Strengthening Expressions of Interest	57
Referents of Choice	58
Problem of Undefined Options: Zoned Schools	60
Remedial and Other Basic Skills Oriented Programs	62
Information for Informed Choice	63
Process for Initiating and Gaining Approval for Programs	65
Section IV Matching Choices and Schools	69
Choices and the Impact of School Structure	
Section V Making Choices Meaningful: School Continuity and Coherence	76
Zoning and the Separate Admission Process	76
Choices and Transfers	79
Other Supportive Adjustments for Continuity and Coherence	80
Section VI Assessing and Managing the System	82
Monitoring the System of Assigning Students with Choice	82
Accountability: New Rules for the New Game	83

INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Chancellor convened a panel of university based consultants in mid-February and asked them to review the high school admissions process of the New York City Public Schools. He asked that the report be presented in early May. Wisely, he also asked Arthur Auerbach, Assistant Superintendent in the High School Division, to facilitate the work. Art gathered existing documents and data analyses and made these, along with his knowledge of the system, available to the consultants. Robert Klein was also extremely helpful in explaining stacks of printouts and the processes of the admission system. Our work procedures, or the methodology of the study, are described in an appendix.

Our charge as a study team was clearly stated, and we have tried to address our responsibility. The consultants, in the eyes of the chairman, have been exceptionally conscientious in attending to the task at hand. Collectively, we must acknowledge the tremendous cooperation we received from the busy principals of the city's high schools.

This report, then, represents our best effort to address the charge within the time constraints we faced. We hope it is useful to the New York City Board of Education as they consider the high school admission process. Our charge, which serves as the framework of this document, is stated below.

THE GOAL: TO INCREASE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS FOR ALL POPULATIONS WITHOUT REDUCING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. To eliminate invalid and/or biased admissions criteria

2. To set forth approved criteria school by school in relation to programs

3. To advise the Chancellor regarding the effects of the admissions program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTANTS' REPORT ON HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION

The expressed goal of the consultants' study was to examine the high school admission process in order to make recommendations that would, if accepted, increase access to programs and schools for all populations without reducing school effectiveness.

The university consultants, after extensive deliberation based upon their study of documents, informal interviews with a few selected students and parents, formal interviews with school officers, and a comprehensive set of school site visits, recommend that the following changes be made in the policies and procedures governing high school admission for the public schools of New York City.

1. The primary rationale used for judging the system designed to assign students to schools should be school improvement , that leads to an enhanced ability to meet the educational needs of all the city's young adults, who participate as citizens in this democracy. We develop this rationale for continuing school improvement in the report.

2. The administration of the student assignment system should be used to promote professional collaboration as the basic strategy supporting the process of school improvement. A program structure for facilitating collaboration is presented in this document.

3. Collaboration among schools within program clusters should be encouraged to serve as a driving force for school improvement and reform. The

collaboration among school leaders should focus on the content of the program, the instructional strategies, and the characteristics of students. To foster this collaboration, clusters of schools in terms of program focus should be established by the Board. A roster of clusters, with the tentative assignment of schools to a first set of clusters, is provided.

4. The Board should develop a procedure so that school performance accountability refers both to individual schools and to the team of schools that form a cluster or working group. The current use of a universal standard, instead of a notion of value added, and the current focus only on individual schools emphasize competition for the most competent students. As a result, school improvement strategies tend to slight the need to improve the schools for the majority of students: the average students who strive to achieve. Competition among schools can now be balanced with cooperation among schools, so that schools can focus on improving themselves as institutions.

5. School admission criteria and mechanisms should be developed within clusters of schools that share a programmatic theme or orientation and that serve a broad range of students. These mechanisms (1) may not include locally administered tests; (2) may not require interviews; (3) may not refer to parental interest; and (4) may not require exhibitions or performances, unless the program concentrates on a performing art, on fine art, or on design, including fashion.

6. A new formula should be adopted for assigning students to educational option schools and programs. The formula should balance two policy interests: assuring more equitable access to programs by students of the City and providing incentives for the improvement of instructional activities and

student services. These conflicting interests reflect the need to provide both bias free access through random selection and the exercise of professional judgment in the selection of students for programs. A recommended formula is provided.

7. The Board should continue to support the development of educational programs of choice. The Board should adopt a set of guidelines that governs the placement of educational option programs in schools of the system. A set of suggested guidelines is provided.

8. There should be a moratorium on the development of educational option schools in order to stimulate development of programs of choice within all schools. If new schools are developed, they should not be granted the right to apply a selection formula. The planning and development of any new schools should be in the context of a specific program cluster.

9. Existing educational option schools should continue to function. While participation in program clusters should be required of these schools, entry into these schools should be governed only by the new formula for allocating students to educational option schools and programs.

10. As a general principle there should be no screened programs. Schools constituting a program cluster may petition for the right to select applicants to a specific type of program, if in their professional opinion a justification for entry prerequisites necessary for participation can be established.

11. Entry into a school program should not be based on place of residence.

In a city system of high schools, we fail to see a legitimate reason why any program should be limited to residents of a single borough.

12. In order to simplify admissions procedures for students, their guardians, and for school officials, the Office of High School Admissions and the Office of Zoning and Integration should integrate their processes for collecting information, making decisions, and notifying students.

13. Schools have developed an array of new programs. In order to assure students that similar programs in an area are of nearly equal quality so that entry into one program is the equivalent of entry into the other, the Board needs to develop a quality control procedure. As a first step, program clusters should be required to develop criteria for reviewing the school programs in their cluster and to form interschool teams to assess existing programs. Reporting on individual program reviews should be undertaken only within clusters, with a summary report developed for the high school division. The report should contain a plan for improving the program area.

14. The Office of High School Admissions should monitor the composition of entering classes into programs of the high schools, with special attention given to educational option programs and schools. Students will have to be identified not only as attending a particular high school, but also as participants in a particular program. The results of these follow-up studies will be used to review the operation of the educational options program and the consequences of the various cluster decisions regarding entry into high school.

15. Referents of students' choices are not sufficiently clear to many students. Students placed in remedial and other skills oriented programs in zoned high schools often do not get to choose and to not know what the "get." These educational activities do not often present themselves in programmatic terms or offer themselves as choices. Many students placed in zoned schools, therefore, think of themselves as being "placed" or "dumped" into "non programs." Zoned schools have an array of regular courses, including remedial and honors courses. Course sequences that represent the "placement" of students should all be described in program terms and developed as legitimate choices offered to students. These skills oriented programs should then be integrated into the program clusters.

16. Equitable access to programs by public school students is substantially impacted by the grade level at which the choice is made. Students have far more choices at grade 9, which is when most non-public school students enter the system. Furthermore, program coherence and continuity is altered when students enter at different points or have different amounts of time to devote to the program due to the grade level of entry. Given the need for public elementary schools to concentrate more of their resources on early childhood education and of public schools to add resources to support entry into high school, especially at grade nine, we recommend that the system reorganize for high school entry. All public high school students should enter high school at grade nine. The transition years between elementary school and high school could be grades 6, 7 and 8, which would permit a common experience base for teachers responsible for planning education in those schools.

17. Schools should not be organized on a term basis. It appears that too

many students in choice programs change programs when schools are reorganized at midyear. The lack of program continuity and coherence has consistently been noted in current critiques of secondary schooling. Multiple entry points and frequent reorganization of the instructional program make the development of some sense of school community, the expression of concern, and the establishment of rapport between classroom teachers and students much more difficult than in schools where there is a student cohort who stay in classes for an extended period of time. In simple terms, people cannot develop a sense of trust, unless they can work with each other. Re-organizing schools on a term basis in effect tells teachers and students that they do not have to take each other seriously, since they will only be together a short time. If schools were not reorganized at mid-year, it might make it more likely that students in choice programs would complete a school year instead of being encouraged to change programs at mid-year. The existing policy that no student can be transferred without the student's and/or guardian's written consent should be emphasized.

18. A system that provides for student choice increases the need for guidance services, so that student may make more <u>informed choices.</u> We recommend that in order to make student choices more meaningful in the selection process that each student be asked to indicate if there is an interest in a specialized school and then to rank order no more than eight other choices. We urge the system to continue its efforts to improve the guidance services.

SECTION I

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEMS AND RATIONALES

This section of the report presents a view of the high school admission problems as perceived by a small sample of parents and students. Next, there is a discussion about the rationales for allocation systems and how these relate to selection of specific criteria. Finally, we present our reason for emphasizing one rationale over another and discuss how the competing social policy interests might best be balanced.

STUDENT AND PARENT PERCEPTION OF THE ADMISSION PROCESS

In order to check our own understanding of the high school admission process, we decided to arrange a meeting with a randomly selected group of students and parents — the chief clients of the school system. We first selected three heavily subscribed programs: August Martin, Norman Thomas, and Midwood. Then, we asked the high school division to use its application lists to generate a random sample of interested people. The sample represented both students who had been accepted into the programs and those who had been rejected. We make no statistical claim for this sample. But, the comments made in these interviews clearly show that the admission process is little understood and the school system is not seen as supportive. We should note that, in order not to bias the statement of these findings, the subcommittee who conducted these interviews were asked to conduct these interviews and to summarize the findings prior to the discussion of the interviews held with school site personnel. Thus, an effort was made to keep these inquiries independent

during the early stages of the project.

In brief outline form below, we summarize the comments. These 15 brief statements represent answers to the questions used in the interviews. A copy of the questionnaire is in the appendix.

1. Parents indicated that their students wanted a certain school and applied only to that school, not to an array of programs at different schools.

2. Only one of the students among those interviewed had been accepted into one of the programs.

3. Almost everyone gave their preferred program their number "1" ranking.

4. In spite of ranking the program number 1, only one student was selected.

5. The student who was accepted, planned to attend the program.

6. The primary reason for selecting the programs was "interest."

7. The students found out about the program by word of mouth and from a local counselor.

8. In the selection process, guidance plays a limited role — may even have hindered.

9. Students read the directory, but found it to be of limited help.

10. The students and parents thought they received little outside help.

11. After submitting an application, the next thing applicants heard was a letter of rejection.

12. One student was selected: none of the students were contacted by the schools in which they had expressed an interest.

13. In selecting students, these schools did not ask that any additional materials be supplied.

14. Only one student recalled being interviewed.

15. Most did not like the present system. Several indicated that even though they had just participated in the process, they still did not understand what was happening.

General Comments of Interest by Interviewed Parents and Students

Parents told their children, "Study hard, achieve, and you will be rewarded." What happened was that the above average students who studied hard were by-passed when the school, in order to meet the 25/50/25 standard, selected lower achieving students.

Students frequently ranked the school of their choice number one. Most students still lost out in the selection process. They did not know that in many of the schools their not ranking the school number one could mean automatic rejection. They thought they had an equal chance at each of the schools listed.

Some of the students interviewed indicated that they applied to over 15 schools, but most of the students said they applied to fewer than 4 schools.

Feeder schools do not encourage students to enroll in "outside" programs in grade 9. This is apparently done in order to keep the feeder schools' ninth grade classes at acceptable levels. Since most of the option and screened schools offer the largest selection of opportunities at the 9th grade level, it stands to reason that a student's chance of being admitted to a school of his or her choice is being negatively influenced by these feeder school policies.

Parents are not aware of how to go about selecting a "choice" school. At best, they understand the program titles to which the students apply. Some students and parents indicated that they went to the junior high school guidance counselor to check out instructions. Counselors corrected errors on the application form, but otherwise gave no helpful advice.

There is a vast lack of information at every level in the system. The directory is of little help to most parents. The feeder school counselors either did not understand how to help the parents and students or elected not to try to help them. Only one student knew that a person could make more than 3 program selections.

Parents expressed a frustration at not knowing how to help their students or how to go about getting the information they needed. Many just check around by asking friends. Other parents had no information which would have been of value. Some parents were given incorrect information by being told that the child had to stay in district schools. At least one parent felt that the junior high school counselor tried to restrict the students' option to one of the "neighborhood" schools. The parent was told that "If you want an education, you can get it at any school." Another was told, "99% of the teachers will help the child learn."

In general, parents do not know the difference between educational options, screened, and unscreened programs. None thought of seeking "political" help in their efforts to get admission to a program. None knew that in September there were "walk-in students" for programs. None of them knew of opportunities available under the "shared instruction" arrangement.

Some of the parents wanted better local high schools, so that they would not have to play the options or choice game. If forced to apply outside their neighborhood school zone in order to get "good" programs, they felt that additional information is very much needed. And, all agreed that guidance at the feeder schools must be improved dramatically, if the system is to have any meaning to most parents and students.

A POINT OF VIEW: RATIONALES FOR ASSIGNING STUDENTS

The selection of specific criteria for determining a student's entry into a given school presupposes the existence of a rationale or logic that justifies the assignment system within which the set of criteria operate. If there were "no reason" or no rationale for assigning students in the first place, then there would be no need to have criteria for selection. The rationale that justifies a selection process may be explicitly stated and publicly defended, or it may remain unstated and unexamined. Even when the underlying problem is created by the assignment system, problems of fairness or equity of access may be stated in terms of the application of criteria justified by the assignment system. The purpose of this section of the report is to examine the stated and implied rationales used in the process of assigning students with choices to the high schools of New York City.

The existing assignment system is composed of five different, somewhat conflicting rationales:

* community identity
* specialized selection
* controlled integration
* choice of programs
* performance accountability

Each of these rationales reflects a different sense of the system's goals. In our opinion, the school system can be strengthened by making educational

policy priorities as expressed in the student assignment system clear and by re-ordering or significantly modifying these overlapping rationales. In judging educational policy, we think of the probable impact on schools in terms of our conception of the successful school. As Joan Lipsitz has noted, "Successful schools are effective; they also meet more than minimal expectations. They are safe, orderly schools where students and adults want to be."

The Function of Assignment Systems

If the school system serviced the expressed needs of every student and provided each student a viable set of program options, then every student could come and go at will in a completely non-selective system. The allocation system would be driven entirely by student choice, with the listing of educational alternatives determined by policy decisions. Currently, the system cannot honor a signiicant number of student choices. Last year, among the 90,000 students entering the high school, there were 380,000 total choices, of which 32,000 applicants received and accepted a choice. One might reasonably conclude, therefore, that student choices are not the primary force driving the allocation system; thus, the impact of criteria for entry into a specific program or school is of second order importance.

In order to make sense out of specific criteria one needs to step back and ask, "What are the rationales that justify the use of criteria for entry into high schools?" Each rationale reflects a different sense of what is good for the system or what is to be achieved by promoting one pattern of entrance instead of another possible pattern. Each rationale, therefore, reflects a different sense of educational social policy and it is this sense of social

policy or justification for one set of criteria instead of another that should be explored before one examines the fair application of the criteria justified by any one of the specific rationales.

At this point, one might ask: what is the system trying to achieve? It is fair to assume that there are several goals. It is also evident that the goals are not of equal importance. In order to judge the priority listing that exists for the set of goals, we should ask if that listing of goals is wise in view of the existing and emerging demographic characterics of the students who make up the system and in view of the broad social trends evident in the larger society, namely, new technologies of work. Does the rationale reflect the best interests of the students of the secondary schools? In order to judge the wisdom of the existing system, which is a product of historical, executive, legislative and judicial decisions, we need to have some sense both of the major elements of the existing rationales and of the system's priorities. The assignment of students to schools is not a value free procedure in which due process alone counts; student assignment is a fundamental educational policy issue, because it inherently deals with assumptions about students and about society.

Summary Statement on Educational Policy

In our considered opinion, the basic social issue of our time is the reform of the high school program in order to respond to a significantly changing urban school population and a significantly different technological society. While this reform effort is composed of various lists of specific actions, the core of these proposals deals with the professionalization of teaching, including the leadership responsibilities of the administrative

education and the work context that permits teachers within the school to function autonomously; that is, to make instructional decisions that significantly impact the quality of teaching and student performance. The reform effort insists upon a socially responsible definition of autonomy. Instead of the more traditional definition reflected in the "my room, my decision" closed door mentality, the concept of autonomy incorporates a sense of dialogue and collaboration among self-governing professionals. Decisions are not to be made in isolation; they are to be made in the context of the school as a social institution. Professional autonomy means making decisions about what is good instruction for a specific group of youngsters. It means initiating and sustaining a dialogue between teachers and students as young adults about purpose and aspiration. Such dialogue seeks meaning. It empowers people and makes them think of themselves as being efficacious. The rationale selected for allocating students to high schools should support this reform effort, so that more teachers and students can experience the consequences of professional autonomy and sense that they are not simply chosen, but are able to choose.

Designing the assignment system or deciding which schools can select students and why they are permitted to do so will significantly support or impede professional collaboraton, as the system will either highlight competition for the "best and the brightest" or the system will modify competition and stimulate dialogue and collaboration. Furthermore, we believe that the rationale based upon student choice during a period of stable or declining enrollments can be used constructively to support system reform. While we endorse student choice, we also acknowledge that schools as social institutions are fragile. The system should not permit the market place of

student choice entirely to replace professional judgment and action as forces driving school reform. Professionals and other mature adults have a responsibility to make wise decisions about which educational programs to offer. Individual schools that currently cannot generate sufficient informed student choices should not be left to compete unfairly within a student assignment system that permits some other schools to select students, while also isolating these less successful schools from the collaboration that could improve them. By the same token, schools that choose not to engage in active collaboration, once a supportive stucture is in place, should be responsible for that decision and, if they fail to compete successfully, they should close. This approach rests on the assumption that local high schools have the local discretion, as well as the access to resources, that is needed in order to design programs that compete for students. Some schools, due in part to such factors as location, the condition of the physical facility, availability of transportation, the composition of faculty, the quality of the leadership team, and/or access to feeder schools, may not be able to convince students to attend. Also, most schools have have had little discretionary funding, but have endured with limited resources, a condition that may be changing. Recognizing these constraints, we nevertheless believe that unsuccessful schools should not be protected through the use of rationales based on attendance zones or based upon rationales that permit minor reforms involving the inclusion of small selective specialized programs, nor upon rationales designed to promote racial integration. ** In effect, we believe that the system should adopt one primary rationale for assigning students to high schools: student choice in order to stimulate school improvement.

Judging Assignment Systems: A Sense of Need

The wisdom of perpetuating the existing set of rationales should be addessed prior to considering the fair application of criteria based upon the existing polyglot of rationales. In the section below, we discuss briefly the origin and intended function of each of the existing rationales. Applying criteria so as to strengthen community or "zoned" high schools in a decentralized and uncoordinated system of secondary feeder schools, for example, presupposes first of all that these schools have fair access to all students, while in fact the "choice of admissions" program designed for integration and/or overcrowding of some schools prevents equal access to students. Second, there is the assumption that these schools can offer and do sustain some coherent instructional programs that work for youngsters, even though conflicting mandates based on categorical funding have to date made the offering of such coherent programming problematic at best. Third, there is the assumption that a sense of community can and should be based on geographic area, when in all areas the housing pattern is externally controlled. Fourth, the assumption is that there exists a continuity of students through high school grades so that significant interaction, shared activity, and common beliefs permit the establishment of a "school community," even though feeder patterns and organizational structures are not aligned. In the absence of these assumed conditions, one must question the perpetuation of a rationale that justifies the "fair application" of criteria ostensibly designed to promote "strong zoned schools." Furthermore, given the general need to reform secondary schools, pursuing a policy that guarantees every school some "local" students in spite of the school's program or performance record seems unwise. A basic problem with this entire rationale is its emphasis on the individual school, without regard to the system of schools.

In the first years of the school system, there was in effect no set criteria for admission to school. Eventually, the notion of an age-graded school emerged; thus, the first rationale for assigning students to schools: age. While independent preparatory schools and some public schools required admission tests, in general any individual within the stated age span was admitted to the high school. As the number of students increased, distinctions among students needed to be made so that an approximately equal number of students could be assigned to each of the existing schools. Thus, in urban centers where students concentrated, there was the development of the second rationale: geographic proximity and the community based high school. Some of these community based high schools offered specialized programs, but most developed "comprehensive" programs with offerings in college preparatory academics, commercial courses, vocational tracks, and a "general" program. The comprehensive/academic high school is now referred to as a "zoned" high school. The criterion for entrance is direct: declared residence within a geographic area called the catchment of the school.

The justification for the geographic referenced allocation system seemed to be two fold: administrative efficiency — it avoided talking about student competency or educational attainment as a basis for assignment — and social identity, affiliation, and commitment generated by establishing the notion of "our school." What must be kept in mind is that the schools sought a unified system, so that geographically identified feeder schools with a coherent grade level organization (the junior high school) fed into a geographically identified and articulated high school. The continued existence of independent schools with some other organizational feeder pattern, such as K-8, the emergence of the seventh grade intermediate school, and the establishment of a

decentralized system radically changed the basis upon which many features of the "zoned" high school rested. Thus, use of the rationale for geographically based "zoned" high schools should be reviewed. The importance of the geographic model varies by borough, essentially in relation to housing patterns. While some students and parents want to maintain an existing sense of community based upon geographic location, other people see themselves trapped in a locale due to the availability of housing. Surely, the old assumption that "our school" could almost always be found in "our zone" is no longer valid. Again, the rationale underlying the assignment system overpowers the issue of whether the application of specific criteria for program entry povides equitable access.

In addition to age and geography, a third logic arose when schools responded to the social demand that the secondary school program have some emphases other than the "college preparatory" program. In the 1880's Charles Eliot, president of Harvard, observed that European universities were preparing individuals for the world of business and commerce and were graduating them earlier than was the case in America. The critical concern was the amount of school time dedicated to the study of classical languges, at the expense of the more utilitarian subjects of science, modern languages, and mathematics. To get around the constraints of the liberal arts curriculum, Eliot argued for a curriculum of "electives" and "equivalents." In his view, the commonly accepted goal of developing mental discipline could be achieved by different curricula. As a result of this reform movement, some years later there emerged the specialized high schools. The first "specialized" high schools were vocational or manual arts schools. Selection criteria were based on the questionable and controversial logic of "probable destiny." Youngsters, who because of interest and/or competency, were "probably not destined" to enter

and complete a collegiate program of studies were assumed to be destined to enter a technical career or "a trade" for which a vocational school was appropriate. In areas where there were not enough students to specialize at the school level, there were "comprehensive" schools with specialized "tracks" of study. This system of specialized (mostly vocational) and comprehensive schools (mostly tracked) stayed in place until the civil rights movement challenged the observed fact that a disproportional number of non-white students were being assigned to non-college programs and schools.

Student Assignment and Racial Integration

The Board of Education has a policy of preventing "tipping" of the non-Hispanic white population below 50%. This policy currently affects approximately 25 public high schools, including all the selective borough or citywide programs that exist within each of those schools. The Board has, thus, chosen to attract and retain whites by guaranteeing them a disproportionately high number of seats within a limited number of city high schools, rather than by simply ensuring and promoting the effectiveness and attractiveness of the high school program. We point out that this entry policy focuses explicitly on racial characteristics of students and not on their achievement or ability to participate in the programs.

The 50% tipping figure seems to be have been stated as an arbitrary standard, especially in light of the rich variety of shades, ethnicities and social classes among the city's Black, Hispanic, and Asian students -- or for that matter, the important differences among its non-Hispanic whites. For a number of years, the Board has been attempting to prove, in the Andrew Jackson lawsuit, that the 50% tipping point was necessary to maintain racial

integration. We understand that to date, the system has failed to do so to the satisfaction of a federal judge.

Meanwhile, as the percentage of non-Hispanic whites in the total school system steadily declines because of non-school related demographic trends, the limits on opportunity for all other students at "protected" schools becomes more evident. Simultaneously, the burdens on the segregated schools that most of these students must attend also increases. Some of these schools, most notably those in the Bronx, are seriously overutilized, while some of the protected schools are underutilized. This underutilization of the "protected" schools results from the fact that the number of useable seats in these schools is controlled by the dwindling number of non-Hispanic whites. Regardless of the number of real seats in these schools, the number used can only equal twice the number of non-Hispanic whites, since each non-Hispanic white is matched on a one-to-one basis.

A number of all-minority high schools has special education and limited English proficient enrollments that are disproportionately high in terms of the citywide enrollment figures for these populations. This special enrollment puts severe strains on the space and human resources of these schools, but relief is not available by shifting some of these students to less crowded schools -- because of racial quotas. These racial quotas severly constrict opportunities for LEP and special education students to participate in vocational and career programs at "protected" schools, opportunities that are supposed to be available to students regardless of race, language ability, or handicapping condition, under state and federal Office of Civil Rights guidelines. (See Standards Governing Civil Rights in Vocational Education Programs , State Department of Education, September, 1984. Note in particular

paragraph 3.2 c on Selection Criteria. Also see 34 CFR 100, Appendix B, Secton III, Paragraph K, The Federal Office of Civil Rights Education Department's Guidelies for Eliminating Discrimination in Vocational Education Progrms.)

"Protected" selective schools and programs are given the difficult and unwelcomed task of determining from a name and address whether a student is likely to be non-Hispanic white or a member of the less favored groups. Although they are expected to consider the race of the student, schools are not given that information on the student's application — even though the sending school later supplies that information to other offices, based upon knowledge of the student. Some schools noted that they needed to schedule entry interviews in order to identify the race of the applicants, although the students apparently think the school is concerned with their competencies and interests. Such schools must decide on issues that are repugnant to most of us, e.g., how is one to classify an English speaking Egyptian or an articulate Pakistani applicant? School officials told us that they were not given instructions in writing. The quotas local school officials are told orally to impose appear to vary from shool to school and to have something to do with how close the school is to "tipping."

Quotas at highly selective programs such as Townsend Harris and Midwood's Medical Science Institute have been defended by some as at least guaranteeing that a certain number of minority students will be accepted. However, since such programs appear to favor Asian over blacks and Hispanics in admissions and to accept disproportionately few students from the most improvished minority districts, the protections afforded most minority students by this quota system are not evident in the data we examined.

It is difficult for us to understand, given the system's stated policy of imposing racial quotas, why no racial statistics are maintained or why schools are required to use such data and are then required to go to such lengths to get the information. The allocation system, as a result, lacks accountability. Neither the Board nor other interested parties can review the actual consequences of this policy. The Board would be hard pressed to determine if its expressed policy of maintaining racial balance were being properly administered, since instructions regarding student classification and allocation to programs is not readily available in writing and when racial/ethnic data on admisssion to selective programs are not collected and analyzed by the admissions office.

Just as local school officials are not clear on how racial quotas are administered, when the consultants asked the Office of Zoning and Integration (OZI) for data regarding how many students were sent and received by schools in order to deterimine the impact of this process on the regular admission procedures, we received data that were withdrawn as being "not accurate." We did not receive accurate data on placements made through optional assignment and choice of admissions programs. In sharp contrast, information on high school admissions placements was reasonably complete (apart from the lack of racial data) and were readily available — in the format that we requested.

One solution is to merge all high school admissions into the high school admissions computerized system, with the possible exception of the over-the-counter entries. This merger would have the advantage of including choice of admissions and optional assignment placements in the more sophistiated and easily accessible information system already in place for

high school admissions. Such a merger would permit more accurate monitoring and careful analysis of school admissions.

There are more practical and immediate reasons for having one unified system for making high school assignments. Parents, students, and guidance counselors are currently confused by having to deal with two different high school applications and two different placement notification periods. At the moment, for example, a student who has not gained acceptance at any of the selective programs to which he or she has applied does not necessarily understand that he or she may be assigned to a school other than the zoned school. A student who has been accepted somewhere through the admission process does not generally know that by accepting any offer made through this process, he or she is giving up the option of a choice of admissions/optional assignment placement.

In a number of cases, optional assignment/choice of admissions programs work at cross-purposes to programs that are part of the high school admissions system. In some cases, optional assignment programs attempt to relieve overcrowding in areas whose zoned school is overutilized, while the same school is bringing in out-of-zone students as part of an educational option program. Education option and screened programs at Andrew Jackson and at Erasmus Hall receiver schools reduce the number of seats available to minority applicants through the unscreened choice of admissions program. Conversely, schools that normally exercise some sort of screening over applicants are assiged unscreened students through the same optional assignment program.

Clarity in the articulation process, efficiency in the assignment process, consistency and accountability in the policy-setting process would all be

improved if one office were responsible for all high school assignments.

The interactions of high school admission and the Office of Zoning and Integration are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three of Advocates for Children's report Public High Schools:Private Admissions. We commend that report to the Chancellor's and the Board's attention.

Perfromance Accountability, School Leadership, and School Admission

The focus of this study is the high school admissions process. Central to that concern is the mutual selection that is negotiated among schools, parents and individual students. Like most public school affairs, however, the administrative process of "school admissions" is only one thread in the larger fabric of schooling as a social institution. In our opinion, admission procedures should focus not only on students and their competencies, but also on schools and their leadership. School admissions represent a strategic force that can drive school reform and improvement. In fact, performance accountability now appears to be the priority rationale operative in the admission process. We believe that the schools' attention to student performance is entirely appropriate. School admissions is the specific process by which student access to learning is managed. School admissions is also the process by which the flow of students into the school is controlled; thus, school admissions is central to accountability.

A primary concern, then, is how school admissions and accountability processes relate and what impact they have on schools and on leadership teams in schools. In business the terms of success are clear and the terms of

accounting are standardized. In schooling, some socially acceptable terms of success are becoming increasingly clear and the procedures for accounting are developing. Acceptable terms for judging school success are "student performance." But, performance has several different meanings: test scores, attendance, athletic skill, job entry, social civility, college entrance, acquired scholarships. The operational definition of social indicators, that is, how these dimensions of performance are to be measured, is not standardized. Also, the relative importance or ranking among these indicators remains unclear. People are not in agreement about what school outcomes count most. Surely, in the process of selecting schools, parents use several other performance indicators to rate a school's past success: parents refer to safety, students' socio-economic status, and perhaps the racial/ethnic composition of the student body. In any case, the terms of school success involve social indicators that are chosen directly through governmental processes (test scores) and those indicators chosen indirectly by interested citizens who select schools (civility, racial composition).

The procedures used to account for school success are also inexact: current research shows that input-output analyses, or the simple accounting for fiscal resources in terms of quantifiable measures of tested student performance, do not, in fact, account for much of the variance in students' observed performance. Research suggests that the organizational processes by which the school's available resources, including student competencies, get "processed" make a far greater difference in generating student performance than does the existing variation in the fiscal resources that are made available to schools. While having adequate resources is crucial, the more significant difference involves how the school uses the resources to which it has access.

The move towards accountability at the individual school site is surely a movement towards the professionalization of school teaching and leadership and towards the improvement of schooling. But, like all social change, the development of accountability is not without its strains and stresses. Perhaps the greatest pressure is placed on the school principal, as the individual most responsible for the school leadership team. The local leadership team has limited control of resources and of schooling processes. Nevertheless, as the official institutional leader, the principal is justifiably held accountable for the student performance: attendance, civility, and test scores. The publicly declared ranking of school success points to the principal. The critical question, then, is "What resources can the school leadership team manipulate to change the success of the school?"

Over the long haul, many changes can be made. In the short term, fewer significant changes can be made. Furthermore, in spite of the press for quick action and results, the relation between short term "quick fixes" and long term performance is unclear. Research, for example, shows that short term changes made to increase school safety and discipline, while necessary, do not generate improved instruction or student performance -- the more important changes. In general, school performance changes as the school culture changes. Paradoxically, the more central and significant any school element is in relation to the critical task of teaching, the greater the level of concern, and the less direct the control exercised by the individual administrator. Because teaching tasks are so important, they are also carefully protected. Change designed to improve schools happens when teachers will to change. Neither adding teachers, redefining jobs, nor changing classroom instruction is easily controlled by the system or by the principal. The principal has little authority to change resources as allocated through

the budget. The principal also has little legal authority to direct changes in teaching. While action on resources and processes is necessary, the "school change" and accountability game is most often scored on short time lines, even though decisions that account for the school's current low performance were long time, complex, and externally driven. In the long term, schools will be better institutions and will have better performing students, when principals with vision and skill can change the beliefs that underlie the many small decisions that make up the daily life of the school. Given the social context and the press on schools for accountability, for the principal the question of institutional leadership becomes somewhat more direct and clear: what factors provide the greatest leverage? What action offers the greatest short term chance of winning the school accountability game? How can the principal get and/or keep the school off the CAR list?

The best way to win the high performance game is to start with high performers. If the game is scored in terms of (1) test scores and (2) attendance rates, then one's chances of winning the accountability game are significantly improved if one starts with bright students who regularly attend classes. Some people think that instead of requiring interest and high performance as criteria for admission, the successful high school, being capable of creating successfully achieving students, should accept its share of high-risk applicants. Surely, they should. At the same time, however, it is irrational in terms of risk taking to start the accountability game with unknown, problematic chances: that is, to start with students who show low attendance rates and poor test scores. The most rational principals, even if not the most educationally wise or professionally committed ones, will see that student selection provides the greatest leverage in the short-term accountability game.

Winning the accountability game ordinarily refers to displaying an acceptable percentage of passing scores for the school as a whole. In accounting for school performance, it is not current practice to deal with the notion of "value added" or gain scores for those students who are there. Furthermore, it is not current practice to consider the different scores for groups or sub-populations within the school. Given the game rule that winning calls for improving the "school's percentage of students passing the tests," rational behavior calls for attention to the possible means of increasing the percentage, either by excluding unlikely passers and/or increasing the number of likely passers. The easiest way to improve one's chances of winning is (1) to add some highly likely students and (2) to drop some unlikely students, while simply holding on to those in the middle. School admissions is a central thread in the accountability fabric. Playing the admissions/selection game is one of the chief leverage points the school has in trying to win the accountability game.

If principals were rotated among schools, then principals individually would have more equal stakes in the success of the system's schools. Similarly, if principals functioned in team units responsible for the performance of a set of schools, then they would have a stronger interest in improving other schools and their performance record. But, so long as principals are expected to stay placed, to be interested only in a single building, and to build one particular school's program, they must compete on a permanent basis for the "best and the brightest" or else they increase the risk of losing the school. To fail is to jeopardize the future of the school; it may end up on the CAR list. Indeed, it may be closed. Capturing students, over the short term and the long haul, is a matter of institutional life or death. Individual

student's interest in equitable access to schools parallels the school's concern for school survival. High school admissions ostensibly concerns student access and choice, but it is also about principals and the future of schools they lead. Given shifting demographics and resources, school admissions policy will determine the fate of some individual schools and the character of others.

While schools need to stay off the CAR list in order to survive in the short term, for the long haul schools need to develop stronger organizational cultures as institutions and more effective educational programs. More schools need to become successful institutions where more students succeed educationally. Strong organizations are built through continuous interaction among peole who care about the corporate welfare; and who through affiliation develop a vested interest in the institution. Thus, there needs to be significant continuity among students and faculty, if they are to have a fair chance at building a strong community. Student admission policies should strengthen student cohort identity, especially among high-risk students who have limited social structures to rely upon.

Concluding Statement: Balancing Interests

The student assignment system must acknowledge and somehow balance several conflicting interests. The primary interests are the students' need to have access to quality instructional programs that serve their interests and needs and to have equitable access to a program of their choice. But, not all students make wise choices for themselves; some students need to be placed in programs that professionals believe to be most appropriate. Schools also need to have access to students. Recruitment efforts on the part of schools need

to have some payoff: the selection of some students from among the pool of students recruited. Thus, the high school admission systems needs to balance the students' need for equitable access with the schools' need to exercise professional judgment in the recruitment and selection of students. Neither a totally random system of assignment nor a totally selective process can balance these conflicting needs.

SECTION II

NEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This section of the report discusses the central importance played by the educational option schools and programs and recommends a new formula for assigning students. Next there are recommendations concerning the elimination of bias and/or invalid mechanisms. Finally, and most important, we present a structure by which collaboration for school improvement might be undertaken, with an early agenda addressed to student selection processes.

CHOICE PROCESSES AND SELECTION: A NEED FOR BALANCE

Choosing a high school is a tough job. Even after youngsters talk it out with their parents, read the high school directory over several times, consult with their friends, and fill out the selection forms, there are still some other steps that must be taken along the way before the youngster actually enters high school.

The high school admission procedure is actually four interrelated processes that operate as a complex set of exchanges among the students, their guardians, the guidance officers of the sending and receiving schools, the program officers, and the central support officers. Program recruitment, program advisement and placement, selection of students by program officers, and student allocation by the Office of Zoning and Integration (OZI) interact

in the admissions process. Random selection among interested students would serve to maximize equity of access; screening students by teams of program officers would serve to maximize professional judgment; while allocations by OZI would make adjustments in the other processes. As noted in an earlier section of the report, in order to honor these valid, but conflicting, interests, the admission system needs to balance equity of access and the exercise of professional judgment.

The entire admission process functions within a legal framework. Central to this concern are state and federal guidelines that clearly distinguish between screening processes designed to identify individuals who are likely to succeed in a given program and screening processes designed to identify individuals who are able to participate in the activities of the program. The difference in these two approaches to screening can be characterized as the difference between a highly selective "Ivy League system" and a more open "land-grant or urban college system" that offers opportunity. Legal regulations are rather clear. Unless there is expressed legal authority, the public schools may only screen for participation, not for anticipated success. Furthermore, research has not shown that schools, whether advanced graduate schools in business or specialized high schools, can predict with any great likelihood how students will perform as a result of instruction. Both the legal basis and the research evidence seem to challenge the need for selective screening as a general procedure.

Bearing this need for balance, the findings of research, and the legal constraints in mind, the consultants have considered separately the three major choice/selections in which students engage: educational option schools, educational option programs, and screened programs. We present our

conclusions for each of these three. We also considered the impact of the "choice of admissions," "Optional Assignment Program," or controlled rate of change program designed to deal with racial distribution and/or building utility. We comment on this process elsewhere.

Educational Option Schools and Programs: Assignment Forumula

Currently, educational option schools and programs are both permitted and required to select 25% of their students from among applicants who read below grade level, 50% from those who read on grade level, and 25% from those who read above grade level. There are currently 8 educational option schools: Barton, Bergtraum, Dewey, Martin, Murrow, Robeson, Telecommunicatons, and Thomas. The reading test used for this screening is administered in April, which is considered the seventh (7th) month of the school year. "On grade level" is considered any score within the range of the test date of April (7) plus five months (November of the next year) and minus five months (the past November). The "on level" range then is the equivalent of a full school year of 10 months. "Above grade level" means any score that is the grade placement equivalent of more than five months beyond the test date. What this means in effect is that each category, whether below, on, or above grade level, defines a range. Schools that are permitted to select students within these ranges have the right to select students only at the top of each range. Educational option schools and programs are not required to select students whose scores fall along different points in the range. As a result, interested students who fall within each range, but not at the top end of that range, may not be selected by the school or program.

As we noted in our discussion of performance accountability, schools can

appear to be stronger instructonally if they do indeed select only students at the top of the ranges, not across the ranges. To increase equity, it was suggested to the consultants that schools be required to select half of their students with scores below the mean and half with scores above the mean. In this instance, schools could still select students at the upper ends of the distribution. Another suggestion made to the consultants was that the computer be used to select students randomly within each of the three ranges: below, on, and above grade level. To rely solely upon a random selection system would maximize equitable access, but would undermine professional judgment as it operates in program development, recruitment, and guidance services.

The current formula relies upon the notion of a "grade equivalent" score. This score is a statistical artifact and does not actually describe the distribution of tests scores exhibited by the test takers. Furthermore, the test itself has already been changed and new scores will not be reported as grade equivalents. ** We therefore recommend that when the City changes to the use of the Degree of Reading Power (DRP) test, that the formula for allocating students to educational option schools and programs use the raw score distribution of actual test takers considered citywide.

Using these scores, the formula for assigning students to educational option schools and programs should be as noted below. This formula tries to balance the need to assure students equitable access by assigning 68% of the students through a random selection process, using the pool of students who have expressed an interest, starting with the first priority request. Similarly, in order to provide for professional judgment, 32% of the students will be selected by the program officers using information provided through the

admission process. With respect to the competency level of students, each program will include a full range of student competencies, but 88% of the students will have average or better reading test scores. The formula outlined below shows how access and judgment are balanced, and it also shows the distribution of student competency.

A Balanced Student Choice and Selection Formula
for Educational Option Schools and Programs

Random Selection for Equity	Selection by Professional Judgment
45% of seat capacity Within test score range of mean score, plus and minus 1 s.d.	20% of seat capacity Within the test score range of mean score, plus and minus 1 s.d.
23% of seat capacity Within test score range beyond the mean plus 1 s.d.	12% of seat capacity Within test score range below the mean minus 1 s.d.
TOTAL RANDOM SELECTION: 68%	TOTAL BY PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT: 32%

This formula acknowledges equitable access by students as a primary concern, in that 68% of the students will enter the program as a result of random choice among students who have expressed an interest. At the same time, in order to encourage the development of optional programs within schools, the local professional staff should be permitted to exercise professional judgment on an individual basis in selecting some students for the program. Thus, we provide for program officers to select a total of 32% of the program entrants. This represents nearly a third of the entrants. Of this third, 20% of the students are in the average range of test takers. Since the program should not be assigned low performing students that the professional staff thinks cannot actively participate in the program, the

program officers can select the 12% of the students who fall in the lower performance range. Overall, the educational option program gets more than its normal share of average and better students. If purely random procedures were followed and the interested students represented the full range of school students, then the school could expect only 16% of highly competent students. This formula assigns 23% of the more competent students. This feature of allocating to edcational option programs "more than expected" access to competent students needs to be continued so as to serve as an incentive for program development.

When one applies this new formula to a hypothetical school that has 300 seats to fill, one gets the following distribution of students.

Students randomly selected among those with an interest: 68% of students

Students with an average reading score

45% of the 300 seats = 135 students

Students with better than average reading score

23% of the 300 seats = 69 students

TOTAL OF 204 SEATS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO STUDENTS WHO ARE AVERAGE OR BETTER STUDENTS

Students selected as a result of professional judgment: 32% of students

Students with an average reading score

20% of the 300 seats = 60 students

Students with below average reading score

12% of the 300 seats = 36 students

TOTAL OF 96 SEATS LOCALLY SELECTED, 60 OF WHOM ARE AVERAGE

Criteria for Screened Programs: A Collaborative Procedure

First, we noted that our specific charge or responsibility regarding admissions criteria was "to eliminate invalid and/or biased admissions criteria" and "to set forth approved criteria school by school in relation to program." We must note that, in a strict sense, the schools do not in fact make explicit the criteria they use in screening students. Schools do refer to screening mechanisms they use in the process. We identified at least 13 different mechanisms used by schools to screen students: interviews, auditions, school designed tests, in-house use of commercial tests, attendance records, portfolios, the priority order given for the program on the application, previous courses, class notebooks, course grades, parental interest, previous local school, and measure of geographic distance.

We have chosen to address the first objective directly: to state which screening mechanisms may not be used for selecting students. In response to the second objective, we have chosen to recommend a progammatic structure and a collaborative process by which criteria and mechanisms can be established by cooperating teams of local school officers. In effect, we have tried to empower principals and program officers as instructional leaders.

Eliminating Bias and/or Invalid Mechanisms

In order to reduce the possible operation of bias and/or invalid mechanisms in the selection process, we recommend the following immediate changes.

** Entry into programs and schools should not be limited on the basis of residency in a borough. The schools of the city should be open to all residents of the city. Limiting entry on the basis of residency in effect makes the background of the student more important than achieved competencies. If a student is interested in a school or program and has the ability to participate in that instruction, the student should be permitted a chance to enter the program. This rationale controls entry into the city's most prestigeous and selective schools: the specialized high schools. We fail to see why this rationale should not apply to all other schools in the city system.

** The edition of the high school directory currently being developed should not include any reference to locally designed tests or modified versions of commercial tests. No such tests should be permitted in the screening process, as their reliability and validity are seriously in question. We have identified at least 10 schools and 40 different programs that currently rely upon the use of locally administered tests. These programs range from medical science to cosmetology.

** Exhibits and auditions should be permitted only for programs focusing on the fine and performing arts and also design, including fashion. Competencies in performance areas cannot be measured adequately by existing

written tests; thus, exhibitions in these areas, such as on-the-spot drawings, are legitimate mechanisms for assessing entry level competencies necessary for participation in the program. The presentation of class notebooks, on the other hand, as exhibits of prior school directed work should not be permitted. Students should not be held individually accountable for the instructional practices of the schools they attend when applying for entry into high school.

** No program should record whether or not the student's guardian appears to be interested in the student, in the program, or in the school. Such background information represents a contigency factor not controlled by the student. We encourage schools to offer open houses and similar activities in order to explain the programs to students, but we think it is not acceptable to use attendance at these or other such affairs as a screening mechanism.

** No interview should be permitted as a screening device. School visits and conferences, after a program entry offer has been made, are very useful to students, who need to decide about accepting the offer. This conference can serve a dual function: just as the student learns more about the school and program, the school can discover in greater detail the nature of the student's expressed interest and the level of relevant competencies. The use of interviews after entry could be for placement purposes, if necessary, but they should not be used for screening purposes. Often, interviews have been used to establish the racial identity of students, in order to facilitate the requirements of OCI. We think this information, if needed, can be acquired through other means that are less burdensome to students and to the schools.

** High schools and junior high schools have joint responsibility for the guidance and counseling function. High schools, however, should not be expected to make up for serious deficits in student and guardian orientation to and information about existing educational options that stem from insufficient guidance services at the junior high school level. Instead, if junior high school guidance services are improved, the expectation is that students' instructional, motivational, and aspirational needs will be served better through more informed decision making and choice selections.

The ideal high school selection process depends upon the informed choices of students and their guardians. Informed high school choices are more likely outcomes in junior high school where developmental and sequential guidance services are available on a systematic, regular, and ongoing basis and deal with pupils' educational, vocational, personal, and social concerns.

ESTABLISHING SCREENING CRITERIA AND MECHANISMS: A PROGRAMMATIC STRUCTURE AND A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

** As a basic principle, we recommend that any student who expresses an interest in a public school or one of its programs should be admitted to that school and/or program of instruction. The student should be denied admission only if there is some valid reason related directly to the student's ability to participate. Students who express an interest should be assigned to programs so that enrollment approximates the total student population, with 50% of the students being below the citywide reading test mean and 50% being above that mean.

** Programs may petition for the privilege of screening students. No individual school, unless it is unique in a program area, may petition separately for the privilege of screening students. Program areas are defined below. Programs petitioning for screening will present a justification of the need or a show cause statement in the context of our proposed structure that makes clear why they should not abide by the "no screening" principle. Based upon our study of school programs, we assume that valid petitions can be developed for some existing programs. The petitions are to be developed by clusters of schools, as discussed below. These petitions should be presented for review by a team that includes principals who did not participate in the program cluster making the petition and include officers from the High School Division.

** Solving the problem of determining which programs are to be permitted to screen students should be undertaken in a collaborative process. Petitions should be developed by schools that share a program focus. This program analysis promotes the professional dialogue that is the best hope for school improvement. It provides a mechanism for sharing ideas about programs.

** To facilitate dialogue, schools should be clustered into sets that highlight a central core of faculty. The first task of the working program clusters would be to determine whether they should develop a petition for screening. Schools should participate regardless of whether their existing individual programs are "ed opt" or "screened" programs. The criteria and mechanisms established by the cluster would apply to all programs in the cluster, regardless of their current status. The cluster would have three general procedures to consider as appropriate for determining how students would enter the program:

* open admission with 50% of the students both above and below the mean on the citywide reading test

* educational option, with 68% of the students randomly chosen among those interested and 32% chosen by program officers using data supplied centrally

* screened with valid measures centrally administered for all programs in the cluster, within constraints recommended in this report.

Since schools are complex organizations, most schools currently have more than one significant program. In some schools, we know the principals were told to design as many educational option programs as possible, in order to capture as many competent students as possible. As a result, the pressures have been for the school to become an even more loose confederation, composed of a variety of special programs. In the process of adding a variety of programs, some schools have lost their sense of institutional identity. The strongest schools in the system manage to have both an institutional identity, such as commerce or communication, as well as an internal complexity of program. We think that more schools need to develop some sense of identity; they should develop some functional sense of school community. To develop this core sense of identity, many schools need to concentrate on the quality of a few programs.

** We recommend that each school limit its initial participation in the clusters to no more than three program areas. In selecting these programs, the local school's leadership team should be asked to consider two primary concerns:

* in what ways do the selected programs serve as models for other teachers in the local school; and

* how does this set of models define the school's sense of mission or future agenda?

The limitation of selecting only three programs should make it possible for the principal to serve as a team member of each key program group and to engage directly in the program analysis, both in the school and in the clusters. Furthermore, in order to encourage careful selection of the three key programs in each school, the school leaders should understand that if there are more than three programs in the school, entry of students into those programs not chosen as a "key program" will be governed by the procedures established through the relevant cluster process. If Columbia High School, for example, has a computer program that is not designated as a key program of the school, entrance for the computer program at Columbia High will be determined by those schools that do have "key" computer programs.

** With respect to leadership and participation, in every case the cluster's elected chairperson should be a school principal. In addition to the local school officers, each work cluster should decide upon its own membership.

** We suggest that each cluster consider broad representation. Without intending to be self-serving, we suggest that each cluster include faculty members from the city's univerities. As a result of the Principal as Curriculum Leader project and similar activities, collaboration between local schools and universities has been extended. This analysis should build upon that experience and include other resources that can bring an array of competencies to the schools.

** In addition to determining entry criteria and mechanisms for students, each program cluster should also assess the quality of the programs being

offered to students. In making choices among the programs offered in an area, the students need to know what is the basic similarity of programs and what are their special features. While the central office is currently reviewing programs, the essential responsibility for on-going review should rest with the program clusters. The first review should start with available documents. Assessments specific to individual programs should be shared within the cluster, with a summary report filed with the high school division in which the strengths and areas of need for the programs as set are clearly defined.

** The system should further develop the leadership capacity of program clusters. Indeed, it is our hope that these clusters will evolve into cooperative units that identify with their program interests across schools and support each other in exploring more meaningful ways to support instruction and student services. We recognize that staff development and/or other resources will need to be made available in order to facilitate this dialogue. Resources should be sufficient to make interschool visits and meetings for these analyses of programs possible.

If these program analyses are conducted during the fall school term and are completed by the December holiday, there will be sufficient time to modify screening processes where necessary and to have those modified processes in place during the spring term when selection processes are undertaken.

Program Structure: Clusters of Interest

To give more explicit meaning to the idea of establishing these clusters as sets of similar programs, we have designed a structure or first set of

clusters. As the system assesses the match between its current program areas and the characteristics of the technologies of work, the system will probably develop additional program areas. These new areas would need to be assigned to this structure. We have structured the programs and assigned schools to clusters on the basis of our current kowledge of the schools, as a result of studying the directory, discussing programs with central officers, and using the interview notes for the schools.

The program clusters we have identified can be thought of as constituting four major sets: academic; technical or applied academic studies; occupational; and artistic and other talents. In the following paragraphs we discuss how individual school programs might be organized within these clusters.

Program Focus or Knowledge Base

A. Communications

B. College/University

C. Health Services

D. Management and Finance

E. Performing and Fine Arts

F. Fashion Industry and Design

G. Tourism, Hostelry and Transportation

H. Electronics and Aviation

I. Law, Justice, and Civil Service

J. Architecture, Buildings and Construction

K. Comprehensive Vocational Education

L. Other High Schools

** It is desirable to form smaller working units within the coordinated clusters, if the size of the cluster becomes large. Some of these program clusters might contain a fairly large number of schools. When there are eight or more schools, there will need to be some division within the clusters, but this should not be attempted during the first year, in order to give all the schools a chance to hear the discussions about criteria and about other agenda. When schools turn to their long-term agenda, they will want to increase the level of participation; thus, they will need to have manageable groupings of schools within their program clusters.

** We believe that the working clusters of schools should be "self-initiated." Where there are existing collaborative efforts among schools, these school related work groups should continue and be encouraged. It is unlikely that any single indivdual knows the identity of all of these existing work groups, so it is important that individuals in these program clusters have an opportunity to identify their own work groups.

** Each working program cluster should be heterogeneous. Cluster heterogeneity should be in terms of student characteristics, community context, access to special resources, strength of leadership teams, and other significant school factors. This heterogeneity helps to assure each cluster that it will have the professional resources it needs to succeed at the initial tasks and to define its longer term agenda.

** We have decided that a useful way to assure this heterogeneity is first to describe school's student population in terms of the socio-economic level of its students and in terms of the general instructional needs of the students. When the schools' student populations are described, one can

then group schools in a way that stimulates collaboration among different types of schools that share a program focus.

Describing schools in terms of student needs also permits one to deal in a general way with the notion of value-added; that is, it makes clear that schools are vastly different institutions and that describing and judging them according to only one criterion and one standard fails to acknowledge the relative ease with which some schools can reach the standard and the greater difficulty facing other schools. Those schools that start with low-need students are different from schools starting with high-need students; but, both schools need to help each other improve. By structuring school program clusters in the way we have done, we think we make it possible for schools to be honest about their needs, to be supportive of one another, and to be encouraged when they make improvements that may not show up on short-term measures.

Heterogeneity and School Types

In order to describe types of schools so that we can test the general heterogeneity within clusters and the similarity of clusters as sets of schools, we have used two program related social indicators to generate a typology. These sets of 1984-85 data were supplied by the Division of High Schools:

* a poverty indicator as the percent of low income students

* an instructional needs indicator as the percent of students who passed the RCT mathematics for January and June, including special education students.

These data are presented in an appendix. Earlier research on urban high

schools has shown that using such differences in school enrollments is helpful in interpreting some important differences in the ways schools use available resources and organize their instruction. NOTE: the test scores are NOT used as a measure of school performance, but only as an indicator of the students' instructional needs. Once the work groups within clusters have been formed with reference to school types, these data need not be referred to any further. As indicated above, we recognize that the percent passing the test can be manipulated and that the inclusion of special education and limited English proficient students stacks the deck against those schools that try to educate students with special needs. But, we believe that our use of these facts only to describe general instructional needs of the students enrolled in the school is legitimate.

First of all, we combined these two social indicators, socio-economic status and student instructional needs, to develop a 6x6 matrix that had 36 different cells, each identifying a somewhat different student enrollment, e.g., 25% or fewer low income students and a student test level of more than 50%. To simplify matters, we have collapsed this larger matrix into a four cell matrix that describes enrollments as "low income" or "not so low income" and as being "low performing" or "not so low performing." These levels do not statisticaly represent two sets of schools, one of which is above the mean and the other of which is below the mean. The distributions tended to be skewed. Instead of breaking the distribution at the mean, the original six intervals for each descriptor were created in such a way as to identify natural breaks in the distributions. In this way, we come up with an index that describes four basic types of school enrollments. These categories are rather broad in nature and serve only to describe general chracteristics of school populations.

School Enrollments: Four Basic Types

* Type I = Student population that is low income
AND is low performing
33 schools

* Type II = Student population that is not so low income
AND is low performing
15 schools

* Type III = Student population that is not so low income
AND is not so low performing
34 schools

* Type IV = Student population that is low income
AND is not so low performing
16 schools

The details of how this index was derived from the data are presented in an Appendix. Again, the precise calculations can be developed in a number of ways. We believe our procedure is defensible, but what is more important, we think the concept of describing school enrollments in this way is useful in considering differences in school programs in order to provide for collaboration among a heterogeneous set of schools.

Structure For Collaboration: Program Areas and School Types

When one combines the program clusters with the student enrollment index, one gets the program structure presented as Chart I. As indicated above, our primary interest is to describe the heterogeneity among schools within program clusters and to provide a way of guiding schools as they form smaller working clusters.

** We suggest that no working cluster of schools within a program area be formed of only one type of school. By forming heterogeneous clusters, one

encourages the program officers who serve different student populations to identify with a broader range of students and to assume some responsibility for all the youngsters who are interested in a program area. This group concern might offset some degree of the current competition generated when individual schools compete with each other for the more competent students. Heterogeneous grouping also provides broader access to professional and other resources of the individual schools.

The program clusters presented below were formed by assigning schools to the first of the three program clusters in which they may participate. Since this cluster will function as only one of a possible three, the schools do not need to agree that this designation is either their "only program" or even their "primary program." It should be one of their three key programs.

Chart I

STRUCTURE FOR COLLABORATIVE DETERMINATION OF CRITERIA AND MECHANISMS

FOUR BASIC TYPES OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS			
Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
Low Income	Not So Low Income	Not So Low Income	Low Income
Low Perform	Low Perform	Not Low Perform	Not Low Perform
A. COMMUNICATIONS			
	Graphic Comm	Murrow, Telecomm	
B. COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY			
Roosevelt	Lincoln, LI City	Beach Chn	Randolph
Walton	Rockaway	Cardozo, Curtis	Manht Cent
	Springfield	Hamilton, Wagner	
		Cleveland, B Sci	
		Bk Tech, Stuy	
		Harris, Van Buren	
		Humanities	
		Utrecht, Midwood	
		Tottenville	
C. HEALTH SERVICES			
Barton	Canarsie	Columbus	Addams
Clinton		Richman	
Wingate		P Richmond	
Bacon			
Seward Pk			
D. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE			
Bushwick		FDR	Bergtraum
Washington		Truman	Thomas
Kennedy		Jamaica	
Brandeis		Madison	
S Bronx		Newtown	
Jefferson		Robeson	
Taft		Richmond Hill	
E. PERFORMING AND FINE ARTS			
Erasmus	Stevenson	Bayside	Art and Design
Childs	Hillcrest	LaGuardia	
	Adams	New Dorp	
F. FASHION INDUSTRY AND DESIGN			
Prospect			Fashion Industry
Hale			
G. TOURISM, HOSTELRY AND TRANSPORTATION			
Parkwest			
Irving			

FOUR BASIC TYPES OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
Low Income	Not So Low Income	Not So Low Income	Low Income
Low Perform	Low Perform	Not Low Perform	Not Low Perform
H. ELECTRONICS AND AVIATION			
Boys/Girls	Lafayette	Lehman	A Martim
Chelsea	Grady	Queens Voc	Aviation
E New York*			Gompers
I. LAW, JUSTICE, AND CIVIL SERVICE			
Jackson	Flushing	Forest Hills	Morris
Lane	Tilden	Lewis	
Monroe	Bryant	Sheepshead	
Jay, King*			
J. ARCHITECTURE, BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION			
Whitney	S Shore	McKee	A Smith
K. COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL			
Westinghouse		Bowne	
Dodge		Edison	
Maxwell			
L. OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS			
Automotive			
E District			
Dewey			

* No current student enrollment.

It is evident that we have not assigned the alternative school programs to program area clusters. We believe that they should be integrated with the schools listed above, but since we were not explicitly asked to consider their admissions procedures, we have not included them in this discussion.

We would like to take special notice of such programs as English as a second language and skills remediation programs. Elsewhere in this report in our

discussion of the referents of choice, we have suggested that these areas of study should be defined in programmatic terms. When they are so defined, these programs should be assigned to program clusters.

SECTION III

STUDENT CHOICES

This section of the report concerns the range of choices that students make and the basic notion of what it is that students choose when they list a choice on the selection form. We present recommendations about how the system can supply useful information to make these choices more informed. Finally, we present a set of guidelines to be used in deciding which schools get to operate selective programs.

ASSURING ACCESS AND STRENGTHENING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Since a majority of the students in the educational option schools and programs will arrive there through random selection from among interested students, it is desirable to strengthen the likelihood that the expressed student choice represents a true interest. Some individuals we interviewed noted that by giving students as many a 15 choices, the procedure only confused students, encouraged random listings, and generated unnecessary lists of names for students who had limited interest in a given program.

** In order to make each student's expressed choices more meaningful, we recommend that the listing be limited to eight choices. As is currently the case, students would continue to express separately an interest in attending one of the specialized high schools.

We believe that providing for eight choices both permits the students sufficient choices to express strong interests and communicates the message

that careful consideration of the priority ranking of choices is important. Our analysis of the most recent high school admission process shows that 79.9% (59,208) of the 74,257 students filing applications for choice programs actually listed 8 or fewer choices; 50% of all applicants chose to list five or fewer choices. Our interviews clearly indicate that even though some students may list many programs and/or schools, students very rarely get selected when the priority ranking of the school or program is greater than five. Programs that are heavily chosen never need to move to the lower priority ranks in order to fill seats. We feel confident that providing for eight choices facilitates for students an equitable access to programs and for schools provides a reasonable assurance that randomly selected students from among those expressing an interest are indeed interested and motivated students.

Blanks should be provided for the student to list in priority order the eight choice schools and/or programs of greatest interest. Students should be told that the random selection procedures will be carried out within priority levels until the available seats for a specific program are filled. If there were a sufficient number of students to fill all available seats in a program by selecting from among students who expressed a first priority interest, then there would be no seats filled by selecting students who expressed a second priority interest.

REFERENTS OF CHOICE

A basic concern regarding student choice, in addition to the criteria being used for decisions, is the item of choice; that is, what is it that the

student chooses and what is it that the student gets when he or she is selected. We refer to the "item of choice" or "what is chosen" as the referent of the choice.

There are two basic documents that define student choices. The Directory provides program names, sometimes provides descriptions and never provides numeric codes for program choices. The Selection sheet provides some eligibility data, program names, and numeric codes for each choice or option. ** For ease of cross referencing, both documents should carry the numeric codes for every item of choice.

The referent of basic school program elements should be made clear and their use consistent in both documents. For example, it is not clear what the referents are for such directory terms as academy, institute, center, program, and feature. Sometimes access to computers is described as being a program; at other times, access to computers is defined as a feature of the school. As defined in other documents, a "program" is supposed to be a three year sequence of courses. It is unclear whether an "academy" is a special type of program or something entirely different. The code sheet often identifies "programs" as coded choices, but the selection sheet never presents "features" identified in the directory as choices, even though it is evident that some "features" are in fact organized sequence of experiences that involves an identifiable group of students, e.g., international bacculaureate. The question is, what must a student choose in order to get access to "computers" at the two different schools, one of which lists computers as a program and the other of which lists computers as a school feature? This lack of clarity in referents and in the use of descriptors may in part explain why some "computer" programs are so heavily

subscribed, while other opportunities to learn with and about computers go largely unnoticed by students.

** The division of high schools should provide definitions for basic program elements. When these educational program elements (academies, institutes, centers, etc.) are defined in a meaningful and consistent way, the two basic documents could be more carefully articulated. Every element that can be chosen by a student, whether it is a choice of a center, an academy or an institute, should carry a code number in the directory, just as a college catalogue gives every course a code number. Items that cannot be associated with an identifiable group of students, cannot be chosen for instructional purposes for graduation credit, and do not carry a code number, should be listed in the "features" section of the school description. ** Every major resource of a school to which some students have access should be identified and the means of access described.

PROBLEM OF UNDEFINED OPTIONS: ZONED SCHOOLS

It is fairly clear that if a student is recruited for a screened program, applies for that program, and is selected for that screened program, then the student gets both a specific school and a specific program. In effect, both school assignment and program placement decisions are made simultaneously. If, however, a student chooses or gets "assigned" a seat in a zoned school, the student only gets a seat in a specific school and is not at that time "placed" in a specific program. The educational consequences of the choice/selection process, as presented to the student, are not the same for all students. The referent of the choice and its meaning are different for students in selective and non-selective programs. This

difference is noted most explicitly in the letter of notification sent to students who applied for assignment/placement in a selective program. After naming the acceptances and the wait list schools, if any, the letter notes, "However, understand that a seat in your academic-comprehensive high school is still available to you, if you are scheduled to attend high school in the fall." Assignment, but not placement is indicated and there is no indication of what placement choices and processes are open to the student.

The school system presents four types of choices — screened, unscreened, priority choice of assignment, and optional programs. From the instructional and the career preference points of view, it is not clear what the student thinks he or she is choosing. Admission officers note that patterns of student choice differ. Some students consistently choose a career field; that is, they rank "health careers" at several different schools. Some other students list different programs at the same school. Still other students list what appears to be a random list of study areas and schools. Surely, students use some meaningful logic to consider the relation of the substantive content of the program and the culture or environment of the total school. The substantive content of the choice, as represented by the "placement" deision, is not consistently made explicit, particularly with respect to the regular zoned high schools. Is it appropriate to assume that a "zoned" or unscreened school is a unitary experience for all students or that placement information is not of interest to zone high school students? Do all students in the zoned high school get the same program? Are there no describable differences among the students' programs that can be presented as codable choices? Is the total program essentially an undifferentiated sequence of experiences? In other words, are choices within zoned high schools sufficiently described to permit

actual program choices and are the substantive consequences of such choices clear to students? ** All schools should be required to define their programs, clearly identifying all programs or course sequences into which students will be placed. Since we believe that all students should be chosen for some program, as far as possible, every student placemnt should be considered in the context of a program. It would be well if the notification letters identified placements for all students.

REMEDIAL AND OTHER BASIC SKILLS ORIENTED PROGRAMS

At the moment, remedial and other basic skills oriented programs, which involve a considerable amount of school time for some students, are not generally thought of in programmatic terms. Students, for example, learn skills in an aviation program "in order to ...," indicating that the skills are considered tools applied to achieve some other objective or purpose. In this context, the skills are not considered to be "ends in their own right." In the remedial skills programs, on the other hand, students learn the skills "because they have been categorized" by some one else. Students do not get to choose these remedial programs "in order to..." It is as if the remedial programs had no substance, as if one learned to read nonsense, rather than substantive sense. This lack of substantive declaration exists, even though teaching material and content do in fact vary and could be descibed in a way to make these differences meaningful to students -- who could then select among them. Extensive research on "school tracking" has shown that a basic problem with curriculum tracks is that the so-called "general track" lacked integrity; that is, it had no rationale or distinguishing feature. It apears to us that the "skills programs" are the current equivalent of the "general curriculum." We believe that all

sequences of courses that constitute a major part of some students' time should be defined in programmatic terms. No remedial program should be permitted to enroll students without making reference to some programmatic area similar to the ones listed above.

INFORMATION FOR INFORMED CHOICE

The high school admissions process is fueled in the most obvious way by student choices on the application form. For these choices to be informed and realistic, there must be clear, concise, and accurate information. Students and their parents, in order to make wise choices, must know about criteria for admissions, content of program, chances of being admitted, and something about the performance level of the program.

The High School Directory which describes each school and the option and/or screened programs available to entering students at the school is one of the major sources of this needed information. In addition to descriptions of the content of the programs, students and their parents need information regarding selectivity and success in deciding on which programs to commit their application choices.

In regard to selectivity, two types of statistics are available and should be included in the directory descriptions to give the degree of competition for the programs. First, giving the ratio of seats actually in this program the previous year to the number of programs applicants for that year would help students and parents understand the overall selectivity of that program. Furthermore, these statistical ratios should be described in descriptive terms so that the meaning of the various ratios can be

understood. As with some college directories, for example, the actual ratios could be ranked from high to low and the quartiles described, with the top one being described as "very highly selective" or some similar designation.

A second statistic would be helpful to students in deciding how to rank their preferences. The ratio of the number of acceptances for the previous year who marked the program as their first (second, ...) choice to the number of applicants who marked the program as first (second,...) choice in the rankings would inform students as to how important it is to rank the program as their number one choice. Since in some schools only those students who rank the program as their first choice are considered for admission, this information is important for increasing the chances of being selected.

Information regarding the success of a particular program is more difficult to obtain, because it is not generally available, cannot be calculated easily, or may be detrimental to certain programs that are striving to improve. Currently, information regarding dropout rate, attendance rate, number of students finishing the program, number entering college or other postsecondary education, and the number acquiring jobs in the program area, is not available on a program basis. It would be helpful to have this information collected for future analysis and perhaps for students and parents in making high school choices. ** Program clusters should consider the significance of this information and the best format for making it public.

The decision regarding whether to apply to a specific (occupational) program

should be based partly on the future availability of jobs in that area. It is possible to give job placement (system wide) and job projections (metropolitan region) for specific occupations. This information could be used by schools and students to determine whether an option or screen program were likely to provide opportunities for jobs.

PROCESS FOR INITIATING AND GAINING APPROVAL FOR PROGRAMS

Questions concerning the criteria by which students get allocated to existing programs deal with individual students. A prior question of some significance concerns the allocation of programs to schools. One might ask, which schools get to offer educational options? Why are these schools permitted or required to offer programs that enroll 75% of their students on or above reading grade level? Why were they granted this privilege? What criteria and/or decision rule was applied in making the decisions about allocating programs to schools?

Some schools have been created as a redesign effort, e.g. Telecommunications, Humanities, etc. When the unit being created was a school, instead of an individual program within a school, the decision was given extensive consideration. As noted above, individual school programs are generally initiated in the context of the high school's departmental structure. Some programs are inter-departmental, but most represent teachers within a single department. Schools encourage teachers to design programs as a means of recruiting high performing students. Gaining access to such students seems to be sufficient incentive for some teachers. Thus, administrative leadership, teacher interest, and competency are the primary factors evident in the generation of new programs.

For new programs, subject matter areas or fields of study could be selected as a result of some form of market research, focusing on students as interested clients or on employers. In our interview process, we aksed "why was the specific content area or subject matter chosen for these programs?"

We wish to acknowledge local staff initiative as a force in designing new programs. Such creative responses need to be encouraged and further stimulated. Incentives other than access to high performing students need to be identified, as the greatest systemic need is for programs designed for students who for various reasons are not performing at high levels. A school should be given the privilege of selecting students only under specified circumstances that reflect attention to system priorities, e.g. in the presence of reform efforts focusing on new technologies of instruction for low performing students. In short, schools should be required to earn the right to select students. Schools should not be encouraged to initiate selective programs only as a means of maintaining access to high performing students, while ignoring the systems's need to respond to the students at risk.

** We suggest that the following criteria be applied in determining whether a school would be permitted to designed a program that would select students. As noted elsewhere, new programs would be expected to join a program area and to abide by the criteria established for student admissions. Thus, permission to develop a new program with student selection privileges means being permitted to join a program cluster that has successfully petitioned for the privilege to select students. The criteria are noted below.

1. The program of study provides continuity. It involves at least a three year sequence of related educational experiences.

2. The program stimulates collaboration within the school. It will directly involve 3 or more teachers who engage in classroom instruction for the students enrolled and who join in planning that instruction.

3. The program will probably provide social support and generate a sense of community or identity. The cohort survival rate for students entering the first year of any existing selective program(s) must be at least 90% as determined by comparing the roster in June with the one for September, unless the new program is being substituted for one of those existing programs that has an unacceptable cohort survival rate.

4. The program provides for coherence. Students in the program function as a cohort and spend at least 3/7ths of their school instructional time in shared experiences.

5. The program is innovative. The program incorporates some new instructional technology. Other schools in the program cluster, as defined elsewhere, would probably learn from the existence of the new program.

6. The program is replicable . There is a high likelihood that if successful, the program or some of its key features could be developed in other schools.

7. The program does not add significantly to the overutilization of the school's facilities or those of schools in an adjacent area.

8. The proposed program utilizes access to special non-school resources or explains adequately why such access is not possible or desirable. Resources might include access to partnerships, foundations, employment for staff and students, museums, etc.

SECTION IV

CHOICES AND THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Students select programs that are of interest to them and in which they believe they have a chance to succeed. Schools similarly select students who are most likely motivated to participate in instruction and to graduate. As noted in our discussion of performance accountability, both students and schools want to succeed on external tests and in acquiring a high school diploma. The admission process should support this mutual interest in student success. We note that students have substantially different choices if they select a program at the end of grade 8 instead of at the end of grade 9; thus, the time structure of the school system significantly impacts the chances of success of students. Student who select programs at grade 8 have a better chance at matching their interests than do students who choose programs at grade 9; thus, one may assume eighth grade choice also carries with it a greater chance of school success.

We realize that the structure of the system has political and economic implications; the more students who remain in grade 9 in a local junior high, the greater the budget for the local district. Our interest is in improving the students' chances of success and our study shows that the structural dimension of the school system significantly impacts the choices and likely success of students.

In addition to the matter of the range and number of choices made available to students, in relation to student success there is another underlying issue that has to do with the structuring of student time. There are at least two concerns: continuity of program and the chance to establish a sense of identify and community, and coherence of program. The first concern may be stated as dealing with the issue of when secondary schooling begins or at what grade level a student moves from elementary schooling into secondary schooling. This is the issue of "school continuity" or the duration of the secondary school program. Instead of dealing only with how the point of entry in arranged, admission to "high school" more accurately should concern the student's career as a secondary school student. Thus, we are talking about the student's chances of success, and how that relates to entry into a program of secondary education. For some students, secondary schooling is currently defined as including grades 6-7-8, while for other students the secondary school program includes grades 7-8-9. The issue is whether grade 6 is a part of secondary education and whether grade 9 is part of the high school curriculum. Our argument is that individual students have a greater or lesser chance of succeeding (as indicated through equitable access to education) in secondary school to the degree that they are structured to participate in a stable, continuous program that provides a basis for identity and a sense of efficacy on the part of the students. Similarly, schools have a greater chance to establish a sense of community and student identity when the school can have a longer school sequence and a common entry time for most students. A student's chances of success in a school community are greater when the school builds both continuity and coherence into its program. While the key component is continuity and coherence in terms of substantive content and sustained interaction among caring adults and students, the necessary condition is simply some notion of

a student cohort — a sense of an identifiable group, as opposed to a loose collection of people who share a geographic space. The basic justification given by school administrators for continuing student screening in selective programs is this sense of efficacy and identity such selection procedures generate among the "chosen students."

Admission and entry into secondary education might usefully be seen as the process of joining an organization. The whole process assumes that there is something stable to join and that induction is a managed process. The basic notion of a system is the concept of interrelated pieces that fit together to make a functional whole; a high school as part of a school system originally indicated that all youngsters entered a high school at the same grade level and shared a common core of studies. The community or zoned high school established an identity and was fed by a defined set of elementary schools.

Several major studies of secondary education, such as those of Ted Sizer and Art Powell who studed both independent and public secondary schools, suggest that instead of being a "community" most schools today are "shopping malls," where stuents wander in and out and select what pleases them at the moment, with little adult dialogue or guidance. Francis Ianni, in a continuing study of adolescents in America, comments on their desire to establish meaningful contact with adults — a cmomunity of adults and adolescents, not simply a "peer culture." Today, the very structure of the school engenders discontinuity and lack of coherence. While the series of short class periods represented in daily schedules and the school year of sequential terms are legally defined, just as the careers and transfers of teachers are also defined, schooling as a set of coherent experiences bounded by the

adolescent years has little definition. Many high schools and colleges work very hard to establish a sense of identity and of "our class." But, many secondary schools have little sense of a "student cohort," due in large part to the fact that students are constantly entering from so many different places at different times -- much like a shopping mall. Student mobility is a special urban problem, one that mitigates against program continuity and coherence. It is exacerbated by a system that structures itself for discontinuity. A careful study of the feeder patterns of the City's high schools clearly shows that the patterns, and thus the equal access of students to continuous and coherent programs, vary by borough.

The charts on the next pages illustrate the problems some schools face in acquiring a student population as a result of the feeder school patterns. The first chart shows the number of feeder schools it takes each of the high schools to accumulate 50% of the incoming class. The data, given in an appendix in tabular form, indicate that the High School of Art and Design calls upon 29 different feeder schools to get 50% of the entering class, while George Washington calls upon only a single school for the first 50% of its entering class. The list clearly indicates that it is the vocational schools that call upon the greatest number of schools. These same schools have some of the highest loss rates, as well. The point is, first of all, that schools face different enrollment contexts and, thus, must respond to their enrollments differently if they are to establish a sense of identity and community. Schools with extensive and varied feeder patterns cannot rely upon the screening and selection process as a basic mechanism to create a sense of identity. Even though individual students are interested in the program and are motivated to study, due to the complexity of the feeder system the students do not have the networks of friends and peers that serve

to sustain engagement in formal instruction. When there are fewer feeder schools, there is a greater chance that the individuals come to school with old friends; thus, their entry is less traumatic. If students are to continue to have choices and are to go to schools in a new locale, then these students need to go to schools where the structure permits the entrance of a cohort and where a great deal of attention is paid to orientation, induction, and to classroom instructional practices that respond to the students' affective, as well as intellecutal, needs.

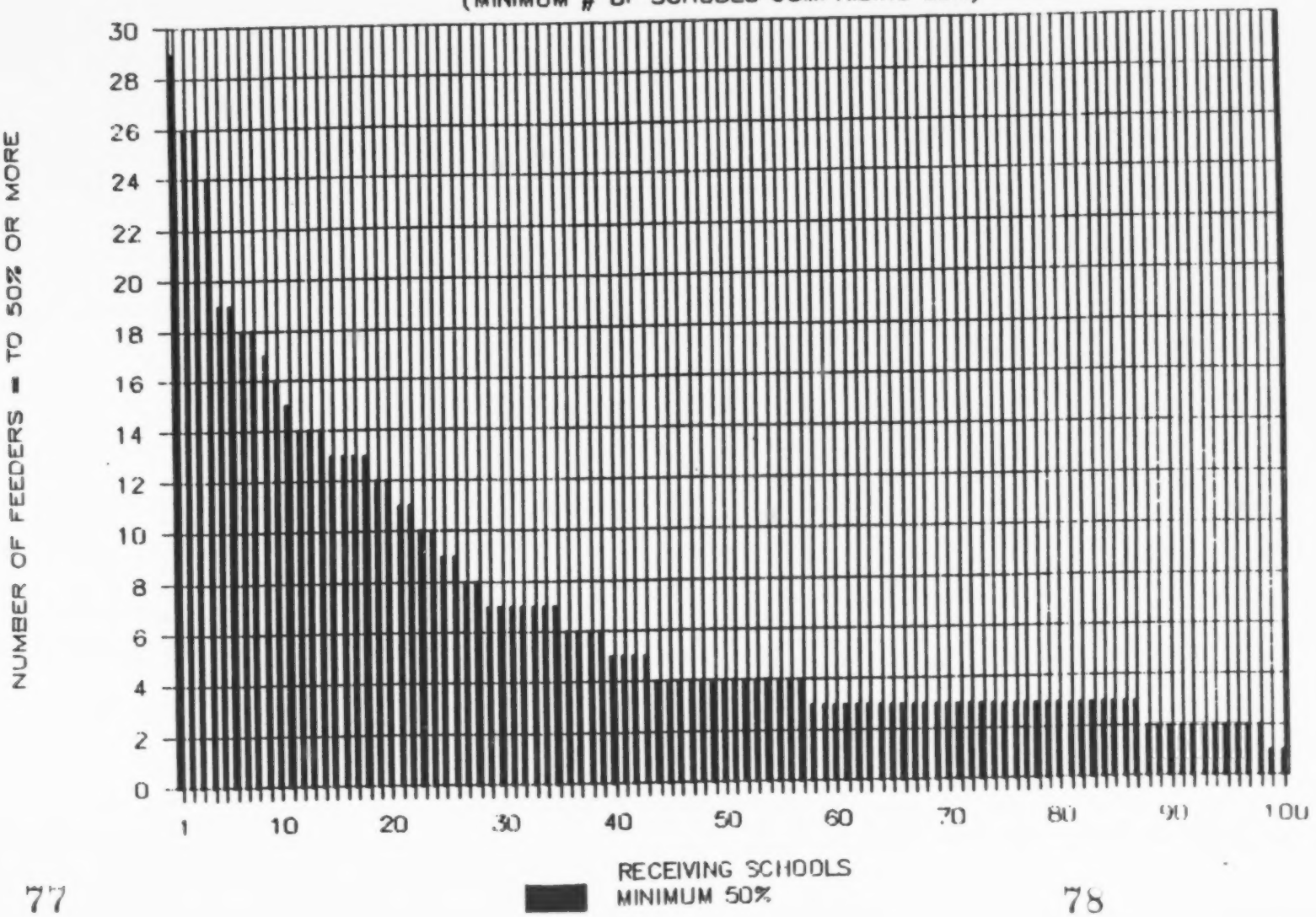
The second chart is perhaps even more revealing. It shows how many feeder schools the high school must call upon in order to acquire the second 50% of its incoming class. The graph clearly shows that some schools call upon a few schools for their basic entry core and call upon relativle few other schools for the remaining 50% of their school population. To summarize these data that are graphicaly presented, we again constructed a matrix in which the schools are described in terms of the number of schools it takes to make up the first 50% and also the total number of feeders the school must call upon. Those data are presented in the table below.

NUMBER OF FEEDERS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE 50% OF ENTERING CLASS AND TOTAL NUMBER CALLED UPON FOR THE ENTRY POPULATION
Total number of Schools: 100

Number Required for First 50%	Total Number of Schools Required 0-40	41-107	108-180	Total
1-3 Schools	8(a)	35(b)	0	43
4-10 Schools	2	30(c)	3	35
11 or More Schools	0	10(d)	12(e)	22
TOTAL	10	75	15	100

1. FEEDER SCHOOL PATTERNS - FALL 1985

(MINIMUM # OF SCHOOLS COMPRISING 50%)



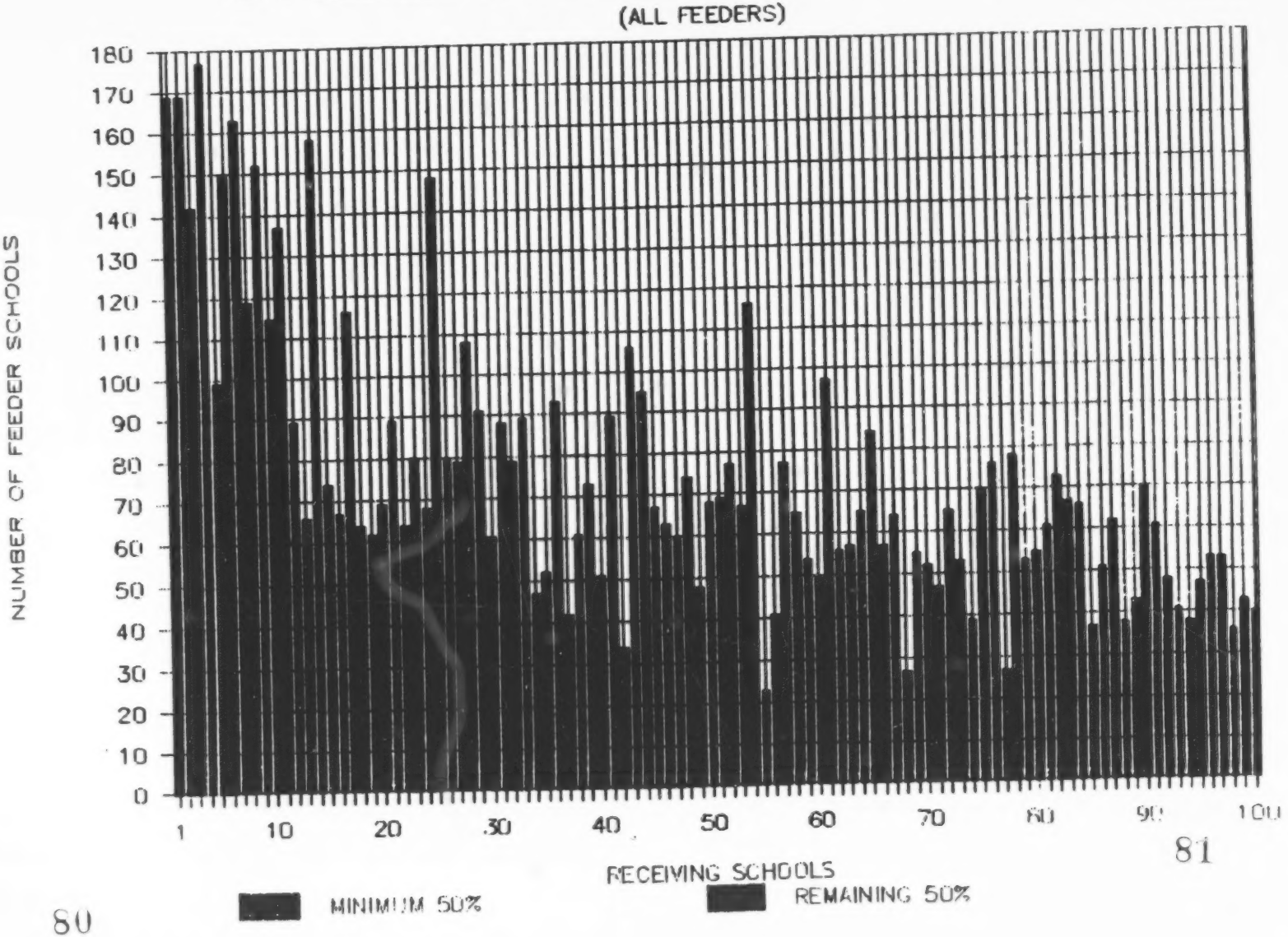
Analysis of the table indicates that there are five different sets of schools:

a = 8 schools that have a small core of feeder schools
b = 35 schools with an initial core and average set of other feeders
c = 30 schools with an expanded core and average set of other feeders
d = 10 schools with little core and average set of other feeders
e = 12 schools with little core and numerous feeders

Inducting entering students and creating a sense of organizational efficacy is somewhat less difficult for schools in sets a and b than for schools with other feeder patterns. Surely, selection procedures that focus on individual students cannot be counted on to generate a student population that has a sense of identity. We believe that the process of selecting students under these circumstances is potentially dysfunctional; schools are led to believe that by screening students they will get an "interested and motivated" student body, while the presentation of the actual catchment area shows that it is not the characteristics of individual students that either create or solve the problem. As we read the data, only about 8 schools acquire sufficient students from a such a limited catchment area as to think that students come with any meaningful shared experiences, with a sense of social past that permits them to see themselves as something of a student community. In most schools, the most stringent screening would still produce a student population with such diverse social backgrounds that there would still be no sense of common identity. ** In short, no selection process can be used for creating identity and community: the school must work on establishing a community after the students arrive.

The feeder patterns suggest that the school population in a high school is not stabilized until the middle of grade 10, since students enter and drop

2. FEEDER SCHOOL PATTERNS - FALL 1985



out from September of grade 9 through January of grade 10. This time of program instability is also the time when the greatest number of students drop out -- if indeed they ever actually "entered" the instructional program. To study this problem of continuity and stability, one could make "school population" problematic or a variable to be defined; that is, we could ask, "By what month, with September of grade 9 equal to month 1 and February of grade 10 equal to month 16, does a specific school acquire x% of the highest number of students belonging to a single cohort, e.g., when does it get most of the students in the class of '89? Using formal admission entry, walk-ins or over the counter entry points, and school reorganization months as significant points, for example, there are about 8 points at which the "school population" could be constituted. In this analysis, the lower the number of the month when the school cohort is constituted, counting from September of freshman year as 1, the sooner the school is organized, and the greater the continuity.

The final analyses of these data are not complete. We believe they are very significant, especially in defining the structural problems of the system; that is, our preliminary analysis indicates that too many schools have too extended a period of time during which there is in fact no real student cohort. The basic problem is the varying grade level patterns of the feeder schools, both public and private. ** The high schools could be substantially strengthened if they could get a student cohort defined in a shorter period of time.

SECTION V

MAKING CHOICES MEANINGFUL: SCHOOL CONTINUITY AND COHERENCE

This section focuses essentially on the problems ineherent in having two separate school admissions processes, each administered by a different office. We also address the problem of school transfer and its impact on the schooling career of studentss, especially those students most at risk.

ZONING AND THE SEPARATE ADMISSION PROCESS

We have argued that the high school admissions process should be administered as a strategic element of the school improvement process. In order to permit the process to function more nearly in this fashion, the recruitment and guidance services need to be further developed, a task the school system is currently addressing; the choice process needs to be more informative and simplified for parents and students; and the selection process needs to balance the needs for informed professional judgment and for equitable access. Finally, the scheduling of the entire process needs to make it possible for schools to provide for coherent and continuous instruction. The admissions process must be judged in terms of the adequacy of information, the simplicity of the process, and the timeliness of the decisions. As a final concern, this means that the process needs to be complete in sufficient time for individual schools to organize the opening of school in September with class rosters essentially in place.

Using this framework, we have discussed at length the function of the Office

of Zoning and Integraton and its role in this overall process. At the very least we find the integration and/or utilization process to be duplicative, time consuming, and archaic in its procedures, in that they are not consistent with existing computer based systems used in the Offce of High School Admissions. ** We recommend that the processes of the Office of Zoning and Integration (OZI) be integrated into the processes of the Office of High School Admissions.

There are two levels of concern: what should be the function of a zoning and integration office, and what should be the administrative process by which it carries out its function. Given our sense of priority, that the schools should focus on improvement in light of the demographics of the system and the emerging technology of the society, we believe that the high schools, rather than focusing on racial identity in a system with only 20% non-Hispanic white students, should be more concerned with dimensions that impact more directly on the instructional processes. Our preliminary look at data dealing with the relationship between the percent of students who are white and the percent of students passing the RCTs in math suggests that racial identity is not highly related to the performance of the school as a unit. We are not in a position to comment further on the need for an office for zoning and integration. In general, however, we think that rather than focusing on the racial composition of the school, it is more useful to describe schools in terms of the general level of academic performance that youngsters bring to school (their ability to pass the RCTs early in their school career) and with their general social needs (as expressed in their socio-economic status). These dimensions more nearly focus on the performance criteria of the school. Thus, while we would encourage further study of the educational and legal implications of maintaining an office

that focuses on the racial composition of fewer than a quarter of the high schools and about 20% of the student population, we will limit our direct recommendations to the integration of its processes with the admissions process administered by the Office of High School Admissions. Integration of these processes will simplify matters for students and their guardians, will reduce clerical and similar work in the schools, and will provide a data based system that permits more sophisticated monitoring of student choice and selection.

Based upon our observation of the present system and its effect on the vast majority of students served by the public schools, we recommend the changes noted below.

** Data should be maintained on the race and ethnicity of all students who apply to unzoned schools and programs and on those who recieve offers. These data should not be made available to local school officers. The data should be used for central office purposes only, except where individual schools were required to follow a quota system. For schools with a quota system, only when appropriate in the selection process could the racial identity of applicants be made known to local schools.

** Racial data should be monitored centrally. The primary purpose is to determine whether groups are accepted to and are entering unzoned programs in proportion to their representation in the applicant pool and whether they are applying in proportion to their representation in the eligible feeder pool.

While not commenting directly on the functioning of the OZI, we must note that we would find it difficult to endorse an admission process in which racial and ethnic quotas were used to limit the access of any racial or ethnic group to programs, particularly if the ceilings did not reflect their actual representation in the applicant pool.

CHOICES AND TRANSFERS

In addition to entry dates and feeder patterns, the policy governing transfers further leads to discontinuity. ** In our opinion, students who enter a school as a result of a choice program should have the right to stay in that school for at least a full school year. This change will give the student a greater chance to adjust, to find friends, to establish rapport with teachers; it will also give the school a greater incentive to help the student adjust. Finally, it should also ease the burden on zoned schools caused by February over-the-counter admissions. If the student chooses not to remain in the chosen program, the student should have the right to select some other program or even to continue academic studies on a shared instruction basis. Transfers prior to the end of the school year can be permitted for the same reasons that students are permitted to tranfer out of the zoned schools: health, safety or a change in residence.

** We recommend that any transfer require some type of affirmative action on the part of the student or guardian. Such affirmative action might include making an appointment at the zoned school or the borough center of the High School Admissions office in the spring of the student's first year in high school. If the family or student chooses not to take such an affirmative action, the student's out of zone school must continue to serve

the student in some way acceptable to the student. The purpose of this recommendation is to prevent transfers that are not fully voluntary. We understand that current high school division policy requires that transfers be at the initiative of the parent or guardian, not the sending school, but that as a practical matter, many students are encouraged by sending schools to leave after the fall term and are not told that they have any right to remain. As we noted above in our discussion of feeder patterns, students probably are lonely and may think that being "back with my friends" is an appropriate response to the new school experience. Students who have ventured out and chosen a new school are seeking a new schooling experience. Research shows that many students need to break out of the old peer group and its anti-school norms; thus, sending the student back in many cases means a denial of educational aspirations. School policy and practice should press for the development of new social relations and the nurturance of aspirations. Transfers, especially when school initiated, are likely to increase the student's sense of alienation from school and lack of self-worth, which in turn increases the chances the student will eventually drop out of school.

** We recommend that when a student seeks a transfer, that the choices offered not be limited to the zoned school. This is important not only to maximize the chances of meeting the students' educational needs and vocational interests, but also to reduce the burden on zoned schools that receive disproportionately high numbers of disaffected transferees.

OTHER SUPPORTIVE ADJUSTMENTS FOR CONTINUITY AND COHERENCE

Somewhat as a parenthetical note, we suggest that other adjustments in

scheduling could be undertaken to provide for greater program continuity and coherence. Program clusters might explore alternative ways to structure school time, so that a wider range of instructional practices could be facilitated. Some schools, for example, might consider longer class periods, as lab and shop courese currently do. Instead of using the short daily period that was originally developed to account for teacher employment, schools could structure longer instructional periods. Students could be scheduled into blocks of time so that home-work applications and extended dialogue happen within the class; thus, most classes could be about 2 hours, meeting every other day and on alternate Fridays. Similarly, as for staff assignments to the schools, instead of adjusting teaching staff units on a semester basis, the enrollment data for each school for each semester of the last 5 years could be analyzed in an enrollment projection analysis and the projection used for assigning an annual staff to the school. Some discetionary funds could be reserved for use in schools that showed an unexpected increase in student enrollment. Such a procedure would lessen the disruptions experienced by students as a result of staff shifts at the beginning of each school term.

SECTION VI

ASSESSING AND MANAGING THE SYSTEM

This section of the report deals with the need to assess the process by which students make choices and school make selections of students. Further, we discuss the need to design a new school performance accountability system, in order to match the emphasis on collaboration and cooperation among schools in program clusters.

MONITORING THE SYSTEM OF ALLOCATING STUDENTS WITH CHOICE

During our interviews many principals commented on their desire to know something about what kinds of choices students were making: were students tending to select a set of similar programs, indicating a career interest, or tending to select several programs in the same few schools, reflecting an interest in a specific place? Similarly, several consultants wanted to know what kinds of choices were being made by the schools: what evidence was central to the selection process?

To date, the school system conducts only a limited systematic analysis of the choice and selection process. Some of the useful and interesting data needed for system monitoring exist. Other information, such as race or language facility, might need to be collected and/or integrated with admission data. ** At any rate, the system needs to monitor and assess the

procedure more closely.

The system needs to know how the consequences of the various choice systems it allows to operate affect the composition of student enrollments at the various schools, particularly at the program level. Moreover, only by identifying students with programs, by integrating data on the student's official record, can the system examine the consequences of its choice programs. In addition, analysis of students by program will allow for follow-up studies of the effectiveness of the programs for achieving the goals of the programs and the system's decision to expand choices for students. Such data will, furthermore, constitute a check on the program clusters' application of criteria for selection into programs.

ACCOUNTABILITY: NEW RULES FOR THE NEW GAME

The state system of performance accountability, in which a universal standard of student test performance is applied individually to each school justifiably focuses attention on student performance. But, its current application seems to ignore the special urban problem of dealing with the pattern of interdependency among schools. In small systems with only one or two high schools where geographic zones are firmly established, the question of interdependency usually does not arise. In smaller school systems, it may be appropriate to judge each school as if it were not a part of a complex system. In New Yok City, however, applying a universal standard to each school in isolation accentuates the schools' ever present competition for the brightest students. Schools' competition for students and the desire to be a "top performance school" are to be supported, as inded they

are. Newer patterns of competiton, however, might serve the system well, by recognizing the need to deal with the problem of interdependency. As a result of the current pattern of competition, some schools have become more "elitist oriented," while other schools have been forced to educate a student population with an increased proportion of the students at-risk and with even more complex instructional needs. In effect, instead of driving basic school program reform so that all youngsters can form a strong affiliation with a core faculty, the accountability game's focus on sucessful students, along with its drop-out prevention funding, has increased the attention paid to the extremes of the student population. The primary mechanisms for winning the accountability game have been one of competing for top students and of designing special programs for some at-risk students. These basic program development strategies have generally served the system well. One basic problem with this strategy, however, is that most students do not exist in either of these targeted groups: most students are neither above average nor at-risk. The schooling experienced by most students is not even addressed when the improvement programs are targeted to special categories of students. As a further consequence of attending to special groups of students, schools that need the most attention at the institutional level -- disussions that consider the school as school -- are distracted from that discussion, as they attend to an uncoordinated array of discrete programs for selected students. In order to focus on schools, not on separate sets of programs some of which require competition for students, we have recommended that each school determine a key set of no more than three programs and join in collaboration with other interested schools to consider student entry and program quality.

If, as we recommend, the name of the game changes from "compete for the

elite and target the at-risk" to "schooling as program affiliation for all," then the rules for scoring the accountability game must also change. In athletics there are ways of scoring games for teams. Games,such as baseball, basketball, and volleyball, are scored on a team basis. Even more interesting as a model are those team sports in which individuals compete as individuals, but the scoring is for the team as a whole, e.g., swimming and wrestling. Similarly, dramatic and musical productions have their stars, but they are critiqued and enjoyed as total performances. Game rules can be developed for scoring the success of schools clusters.

There are at least several special research and development centers that specialize in conflict resolution and cooperation. David W. Johnson and Roger Johnson, for example, direct the University of Minnesota's Center for Cooperative learning and Morton Deutsch directs such a center at Teachers College Columbia. These centers consider cooperative behavior in a number of different settings. Some focus on the school as a community, while others develop and demonstrate ways in which individual competition at the classroom level can be re-organized on a team basis. Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins' Center for Social Organization of Schools has established ways to score the success of academic teams within the subject matter classroom. In this latter instance, there is both a notion of value added, in that progress is relative to one's starting point, and a notion that strong students can and should support weaker students, instead of competing with them unfairly. Success, judged in terms of academic progress and social tolerance, is greater for all youngsters in the cooperative classrooms. These centers have been and continue to be involved in the New York City schools. They could be seen as special resources available to the schools in the effort to develop rules for scoring cooperative success.

** We recommend that the Board develop ways to apply performance accountability criteria to program clusters of schools. If schools within clusters are to collaborate and support one another in order to make the total system of high school even more successful, as we have recommended above, then their efforts to improve themselves as schools should be accounted for in terms of the cluster, not only in terms of their performance as isolated individual schools. Principals should think of themselves as being accountable for the program cluster; thus, the school with a more wealthy, high performing student body could not be "a winner," unless that school also belonged to a "winning cluster" in which the overall rate of high school success for all students was acceptable.

APPENDICES

CONSULTANT	SCHOOL	VISIT TO SCHOOL	INTERVIEW	TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
GENE GEISERT	Manhattan Center	X		
	Murry Bergtraum	X		
	Norman Thomas	X		
	Andrew Jackson	X		
	Aviation	X		
	Flushing			X
	Forest Hills			X
	Francis Lewis			X
	Hillcrest	X		
	Queens Vocational	X		
	Thomas Edison	X		
FLOYD M. HAMMACK	Midwood	X		
	Chelsea		X	
	Julia Richman		X	
	Louis D. Brandeis	X		
	Martin L. King			X
	William H. Taft			X
SAM JOHNSON	A. P. Randolph	X		
	H.S. Fash. Indust.	X		
	Park West	X		
	Franklin K. Lane			X
	Jamaica		X	
	John Bowne		X	
	Martin V. Buren			X
	Townsend Harris	X		
	Forest Hills			X
MILDRED K. LEE	Adlai E. Stevenson			X
	Alfred E. Smith	X		
	Evander Childs	X		
	Grace Dodge		X	
	Harry S. Truman			X
	James Monroe			X
	Jane Addams		X	
	John F. Kennedy			X
	Morris			X
	Samuel Gompers	X		
	South Bronx		X	
	Walton	X		
	Edward R. Murrow	X		

Design of Study

In order to better understand the high school application and selection processes now operating in almost all of the New York City high schools, a study was designed and conducted in the spring of 1986.

Phase I:

The Personnel. Dr. Frank Smith, chair of the Department of Educational Administration at Teachers College, Columbia University, was hired by the New York City Board of Education to direct the study. He, with the assistance of Board of Education personnel, selected a team of nine university professors and education consultants to develop a questionnaire, conduct all interviews, and participate in the analysis of data collected (See Appendix).

Information Exchange. To facilitate the development of a meaningful questionnaire, it was first necessary for the consultants to meet with Mr. Arthur Auerbach, Superintendent in Charge of Operations for the New York City Board of Education, and Mr. Robert Klein, Project Director of the High School Automated Admissions System. In addition to these preliminary, background sessions, the consultants attended a meeting at which many high school principals presented their views regarding the processes now in place. The consultants also carefully reviewed

the existing High School Directory to better inform themselves on the curricula and policies at each school.

Other pertinent student and program data were obtained from the Office of High School Admissions.

Phase II:

Survey Development. The full team of researchers participated in developing the issues which needed to be addressed through the interview process. However, given the size of the team, it was decided that a subcommittee would draft a questionnaire, which would then be reviewed and critiqued by all of the consultants. This review/critique session resulted in a semi-structured interview guide with both closed and open-ended questions (See Appendix).

Careful consideration was given to word order and usage, length of question, and question clarity. Since these questionnaires would be used in face-to-face interviews as well as in those conducted by telephone, attention had to be paid to the differences and problems presented by these two modes of survey data collection.

The high school admissions process results in student assignment and placement. As such, although the constraints of time and personnel made it impossible to thoroughly examine the critical opinions and perceptions of parents and students, the consultant team was interested in gaining some understanding of the process from the perspective of these key participants. Thus, a second brief questionnaire was designed for parents (See Appendix).

Pretesting. As a check on vocabulary, language clarity, respondent understanding of questions, and respondent reactions to the interview, a high school principal from the same population as the main study was invited to participate in a "pilot" interview. This pilot interview was conducted by one of the consultants while the other team members watched and listened. In addition, the principal himself was asked to comment on the questionnaire and the process.

From this pretest, critical changes in the questionnaire were made.

Phase III:

Site Selection. There are 111 New York City high schools, but only those schools which offer programs requiring special admissions procedures were considered to be the total population for this study. 89 schools composed this population, and all 89 building principals were interviewed.

Since the procedures for admission to the four specialized high schools, Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Technical High School, Stuyvesant High School, and La Guardia High School of Music and the Arts, are regulated by New York State Education Law 25906, these schools were not included in this study.

Interview Type. The time constraints imposed by the Board of Education required the use of two interview techniques. Although nine consultants were hired to participate in this effort, it was not possible for all 89 school principals to be visited at their school sites. Those schools which had many different special programs were assigned to the face-to-face

interview category; underlying this decision was the belief that a telephone interview would be extremely difficult to conduct, and would result in the distortion of the data.

The second tier of schools had fewer special program offerings in place. The principals at these schools were called and interviewed by telephone.

Phase IV:

Precontacting the Sample. In advance of the interview, each high school principal was sent a cover letter describing the study's rationale and the process which would follow. Each received a sample questionnaire which was identical to the one to be used during the actual interview. Further, at the April borough-wide meetings held by their superintendents, the principals received additional information regarding the study.

Families from three junior high schools were contacted by mail and asked to participate in an interview. The parents were drawn from a sample whose children had either received acceptances or rejections from programs at Midwood High School, August Martin High School or Norman Thomas High School. The parents were asked to meet with a consultant at one of these three schools at a specified time and date.

Phase V:

The Principal Interview. Based on the criterion described previously (face-to-face vs. telephone method), each consultant was randomly assigned a group of principals to visit and another group to telephone. Given the length of the interview, in both cases the consultants first called to set an appointment time.

For each distinct program requiring a special admissions procedure, the principals were asked to respond to all of the questions on the survey.

Interviewing the Parents. All parent interviews were face-to-face. A very limited number of parents appeared for their scheduled interviews.

Phase VI:

Analysis of Data. During two all-day meetings, the consultants discussed the data they had collected, the impressions they had gained, and their perceptions of the high school admissions process. The consultants were not able to subject their data to any kind of formal, statistical analysis due to the time limitations.

SCHEDULE OF CONSULTANT INTERVIEWS
HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS REVIEW

CONSULTANT	SCHOOL	VISIT TO SCHOOL	INTERVIEW	TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
STEPHEN F. BRUMBERG	DeWitt Clinton	X		
	Herbert H. Lehman		X	
	Abraham Lincoln		X	
	Clara Barton	X		
	Lafayette			X
	William E. Grady	X		
	Charles E. Hughes	X		
	George Washington			X
	Seward Park	X		
BRUCE S. COOPER	Automotive		X	
	Erasmus		X	
	East New York		X	
	George Westinghouse	X		
	Samuel J. Tilden			X
	Sarah J. Hale			X
	Thomas Jefferson			X
GARY M. CROW	John Dewey	X		
	H.S. of Art & Design	X		
	H.S. Graph. Com. Arts		X	
	Mabel D. Bacon		X	
	Washington Irving			X
	Bayside			X
	Benjamin Cardozo		X	
	Far Rockaway			X
	Richmond Hill			X
	Springfield Gardens			X
	Ralph McKee	X		
	Tottenville	X		
ANA DURAN	H.S. Telecom Arts	X		
	Sheepshead Bay		X	
	Grover Cleveland			X
	John Adams			X
	Long Island City			X
	Newtown		X	
	William C. Bryant			X
	William H. Maxwell			X
	Christopher Columbus			X
	Boys and Girls			X

CONSULTANT	SCHOOL	VISIT TO SCHOOL	INTERVIEW	TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
GENE GEISERT	Manhattan Center	X		
	Murry Bergtraum	X		
	Norman Thomas	X		
	Andrew Jackson	X		
	Aviation	X		
	Flushing			X
	Forest Hills			X
	Francis Lewis			X
	Hillcrest	X		
	Queens Vocational	X		
	Thomas Edison	X		
FLOYD M. HAMMACK	Midwood	X		
	Chelsea		X	
	Julia Richman		X	
	Louis D. Brandeis	X		
	Martin L. King			X
	William H. Taft			X
SAM JOHNSON	A. P. Randolph	X		
	H.S. Fash. Indust.	X		
	Park West	X		
	Franklin K. Lane			X
	Jamaica		X	
	John Bowne		X	
	Martin V. Buren			X
	Townsend Harris	X		
	Forest Hills			X
MILDRED K. LEE	Adlai E. Stevenson			X
	Alfred E. Smith	X		
	Evander Childs	X		
	Grace Dodge		X	
	Harry S. Truman			X
	James Monroe			X
	Jane Addams		X	
	John F. Kennedy			X
	Morris			X
	Samuel Gompers	X		
	South Bronx		X	
	Walton	X		
	Edward R. Murrow	X		

CONSULTANT	SCHOOL	VISIT TO SCHOOL	INTERVIEW	TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
ROBERTA TRACHTMAN	ushwick			X
	Franklin F. Roosevelt			X
	John Jay			X
	Paul Robeson			X
	August Martin	X		
	James Madison		X	
	Beach Channel		X	
	Francis Lewis			X

RK:111

STUDENT/PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To how many schools and/or programs did you apply?

2. How many acceptances did you get?

3. On your application, what ranking did you give to the program at this school? (August Martin, Norman Thomas, Midwood)

4. Were you accepted to this program?

5. Are you planning to attend this program in September, 1986?

6. Why did you select the programs on your application?

7. How did you find out about them?

8. What role did your junior high school teachers/guidance personnel/principal play in the selection process?

   Did they:

Yes	No	
------	------	Help you make your choices?
------	------	Help you fill out the application?
------	------	Provide you with necessary information about the programs?

9. Let's talk about the High School Directory Book.

Did you read it before making your selection?

9a. If yes, did it help you? How?

9b. If it did NOT help you, why not?

10. Did you receive any outside assistance in the selection process?

10a. Informational Help?

10b. Political Help?

11. After you submitted your application, what happened? How long did it take until you received any information about your status?

12. Were you contacted by any of the schools in which you indicated interest?

12a. What did they ask you to do?

12b. If conflicts arose, how were they resolved?

13. What materials, if any, were you asked to bring?

13a. Were there any procedures in which you were asked to take part?

13b. Were there any auditions, tests, or interviews?

14. Do you feel that the questions asked at the interview were good questions to ask considering the program for which you applied?

15. What do you think of the high school admissions process?

15a. Why did you like it?

15b. How would you improve it?

13b. Were there any auditions, tests, or interviews?

14. Do you feel that the questions asked at the interview were good questions to ask considering the program for which you applied?

15. What do you think of the high school admissions process?

15a. Why did you like it?

15b. How would you improve it?

Consultants' Interview Guide
March-April, 1986

A copy of this interview guide is being sent to each high school Principal prior to being contacted by a consultant. Each Principal should know that the information collected as answers to the questions in the first section of this interview will be presented in the report with the identification of the school. The information collected in the second section of the interview will be considered "personal notes" for use by the individual consultant as background information for framing the conclusions of the study. Only the individual consultant will have access to these personal notes.

For the purposes of this study, almost all high school Principals will be interviewed. A large number of schools will be visited by consultants. Principals of some other schools will be interviewed in face-to-face situations, but not necessarily at the school site. Still other principals will be interviewed by telephone. The type of interview situation was determined largely by the number and type of student choices offered by the school.

QUESTIONS IN SECTION ONE: PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. According to our records, the following choices for instructional programs are available at your school. Is this list of programs accurate for the Directory which will be used for student high school admissions in September 1987? The Directory for the 87-88 school year will be printed this summer.

Name of this School _____ 1/3

Attendance rate for this school last year _____% 4/5

(1) Title: _____ 6/8

Director: _____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen 9/10

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____ 11/13
14/16

(2) Title: _____

Director: _____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____

(3) Title:_____

Director:_____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____

(4) Title:_____

Director:_____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____

(5) Title:_____

Director:_____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____

(6) Title:_____

Director:_____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____

(7) Title:_____

Director:_____

Est. attendance rate: _____% Type Choice: ___Opt ___Screen ___Unscreen

Declared seat capacity _____ Number first round offers _____

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED IN SEQUENCE FOR EACH PROGRAM THAT SELECTS STUDENTS.

Program Number:_____ Page # of this report:____

2.Can we please talk about each of those school programs where your school has some selection process other than random selection? Perhaps it is easier to talk about one program at a time. For the first program that selects students (GIVE NAME OF PROGRAM FROM YOUR LIST ON PAGE ONE), please tell me

2.a Who is the director of this program? (Enter data on worksheet, #1.)

2.b What is its estimated attendance rate? (Enter data on worksheet, #1.)

3.a To what discrete resources, if any, does this program have access? 17/20
(FYI alumni support groups, corporations, endowment funds, etc)

3.b What impact do these discrete resources have on the number and quality of applicants for this program? 21/23

4. What screening devices or mechanisms are used by the school for selecting students for this program?

24 ____interview 25____audition 26__school designed test

27__in-house use of commercial test 28__attendance

29__portfolio 30__ranking of choice 31____courses taken

32____parent interest 33____previous school

34_____ 35_____ 36_____

5. Why are these specific devices used for selecting students? What evidence do you have that these are the most appropriate and/or effective devices? 37/41

6. What criteria are used in reviewing applicants?

(42)_____

(43)_____

(44)_____

(45)_____

(46)_____

(47)_____

(48)_____

7. Why are these criteria considered appropriate for this program? 49/52

8. How is the information gathered by these various devices recorded or processed so that it can be used in the decisions process; that is, what scales, measures, or notes are used in the decision making process?
(FYI portfolios are ranked on 3 different criteria, each on a 10 point scale.)
53/57

9.a How are these different criteria and devices related to one another in the selection process? Are all criteria of equal weight or importance or are some of them more important than others?

_____ criteria are of equal weight or importance 58/

_____ criteria are not of equal weight or importance; they vary

9.b . . . If not all equal weight, could you use percentages to show relative . . .
rank order the relative importance of the different criteria?
(If necessary, refer to list of criteria recorded under #6 above.)

(59) ____% _____

(60) ____% _____

(61) ____% _____

(62) ____% _____

(63) ____% _____

(64) ____% _____

(65) ____% _____

10. Tell me briefly how people in the school review this information about applicants and produce a list of students to whom first round offers should be made; that is, tell me who participates in the decision making and how?

66/72

11. Is the opinion of each participant in the decision making process considered to be of equal value? ___ Yes ___No — Why not?

73/76

12.a Is there a vote, written ranking, or other formal procedure used for making the final decision about selecting individual applicants?

____Yes ____ No 77

12.b If not, how is a decision made? 78/80

13. In what ways does a student's status as being a special ed student or limited English proficient student influence the chances of being selected?

81/85

14.a What are the effects on other screened and unscreened programs in the school of using these criteria and devices for this program?

86/89

14.b. What is the effect of this program on other high schools in your area?

90/93

14.c What effect do choice programs in other high schools have on this high school?

94/97

15. Thinking about the last three years, estimate the annual number of POPs or students who entered this program through some process other than standard selection through first round offer and the wait list?

Estimated annual number of non-standard entrants _____ 98/9

16.a Did this program enter "walk-in" students in September?
___Yes ___No 100
If yes, how many walk-ins were admitted:_____ 101/2
Why were these student admitted? 103/6

16.b How many, if any, students take courses in another school and participate in this program on a "shared instruction" basis? _____

107/8

16.c Do you think that shared instruction should be expanded?
____ Yes ____ No 109
Why? 110/12

17.a Why did the program make the number of first round offers that it did?
113/16

17.b What constraints, regulations, or decisions determine seat capacity for this program?
117/21

18.a How accurate do you think the information is that you use for making the selection? On a scale from 100% total accuracy to 0 as completely inaccurate, overall how accurate are the data you rely upon for a decision?
_____% 122/23

18.b As an informed estimate of accuracy, what percentage of residential addresses are descriptively accurate in designating the student's actual home?
estimated _____% 124/25

18.c What impact does this accuracy rate have on students' access to this program?
126/29

19.a What descriptors would you use to characterize the students in your program? (FYI highly motivated, mature, new immigrant, poorly skilled)

130/33

19.b In the school as a whole? 134/38

20. For this program, could there be a specified minimum level of preparation for all entry students, with random selection among interested students who meet this minimum requirement?

139

If this program COULD NOT SUCCEED with a specified minimum level of entry performance with random selection among qualified students, why not?

140/44

If this program COULD SUCCEED with a specified minimum level of entry performance and random selection among qualified students is that now the case? Are CURRENT ENTRY PERFORMANCE levels set at the minimum necessary for program success?

145

If this program COULD SUCCEED with minimum entry levels but CURRENT ENTRY LEVELS ARE NOT MINIMUM, what would be the appropriate criteria, measure and performance level for this program? (FYI verbal ability; reading test; 55%)

146/51

25.a According to the design of the program, what percentage of classes per day do the first year students spend together as a cohort or group of students identified with the program?

_____% of the school day 152/53

25.b If students do not share at least 50% of their class sessions, what is done to generate among student in this program a sense of program or group identity?
154/58

26. In terms of their primary instructional assignment, what percentage of the teachers who teach students in this program during the students' last three years in high school would identify themselves as being associated with and committed to this program? _____%

159/60

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO THE SET OF PROGRAMS OR TO THE SCHOOL AS A WHOLE; THUS, THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ASKED ONLY ONCE.

27. Are there questions that your staff would like to see added to the high school application? (Please,distinguish between "program selection" data and "program placement" data.)

161/65

28. If your screened or optional programs have special names, such as

academy:_____ 166/67

institute:_____ 168/69

center:_____ 170/71

to what distinctions among content and/or students do these terms refer?

29. What function was your screened or optional program designed to serve at your school? Why is it important to have these programs at the school?

172/74

30. Why was the specific content area or subject matter chosen for these programs?

175/77

31. What is your opinion of the system's strategy of encouraging open choice and competition among schools for students?

178/82

SECTION TWO OF THE INTERVIEW: PERSONAL NOTES
FOR USE BY THE INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT ONLY. DO NOT SUBMIT THESE DATA WITH YOUR REPORT.

We have discussed a number of concerns dealing with program design and student selection or choice procedures. The consultants as a group will meet to discuss the information we have gathered from school leaders. Are there matters that I should understand in order to interpret these data in a more informed manner? If so, could you please offer those comments?

DIVISION OF HIGH SCHOOLS
Bolvia Ballatt, Executive Director

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Office of D.A.T.A.

RECEIVING HIGH SCHOOLS

Listed In Descending Order By The Minimum Number Of Feeder Schools
Which Provide Fifty Percent Of The Incoming Class

SCHOOL NAME	RANK	NUMBER OF FEEDER SCHOOLS MINIMUM * 50 %	NUMBER OF FEEDER SCHOOLS REMAINING 50 %	NUMBER OF FEEDER SCHOOLS TOTAL	NUMBER OF PUPILS IN THE ENTERING CLASS TOTAL	PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS * INCL. IN 50%	PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS * NOT INCL. IN 50%
Art and Design	1	29	140	169	764	88	
Fashion Industries	2	26	143	169	778	83	
H.S. Graphic Comm. Arts	3	26	116	142	488	35	
Park West	4	24	153	177	1813	184	
Automotive	5	19	80	99	569	26	
Norman Thomas	6	19	131	150	943	41	
Brooklyn Technical	7	18	145	163	1288	184	
Chelsea	8	18	101	119	489	39	
Murry Bergtraum	9	17	135	152	885	134	
Mabel D. Bacon	10	16	99	115	452	22	
Aviation	11	15	122	137	788	158	
George Westinghouse	12	14	75	89	546		7
Samuel Gompers	13	14	52	66	426	15	
Washington Irving	14	14	144	158	884	179	
Alfred E. Smith	15	13	61	74	565		12
Eli Whitney	16	13	54	67	412		4
F. H. Laguardia	17	13	103	116	484	67	
William E. Grady	18	13	51	64	386	24	
Dewitt Clinton	19	12	50	62	1888		24
Grace Dodge	20	12	57	69	632		9
Clara Barton	21	11	78	89	538	27	
Jane Addams	22	11	53	64	528		3
A. Phillip Randolph	23	10	78	88	483	36	
Thomas Edison	24	10	58	68	499	38	
Julia Richman	25	9	139	148	1838	139	
Walton	26	9	71	80	1118	94	
Bronx H.S. Of Science	27	8	71	79	556	119	
Stuyvesant	28	8	100	108	737	191	
August Martin	29	7	84	91	544	72	
East New York	30	7	54	61	468		8
Edward R. Murrow	31	7	81	88	941	184	
John Dewey	32	7	72	79	1076	98	
Sarah J. Hale	33	7	82	89	713	65	
Townsend Harris	34	7	40	47	194	36	
William H. Maxwell	35	7	45	52	393		15

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	RANK	NUMBER OF FEEDER SCHOOLS MINIMUM * 50 %	REMAINING 50 %	TOTAL	NUMBER OF PUPILS IN THE ENTERING CLASS TOTAL	PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS * INCL. IN 50%	NOT INCL. IN 50%
Evander Childs	36	6	87	93	674	47	
Louis D. Brandeis	37	6	36	42	684		44
Morris	38	6	55	61	623	65	
Queens Vocational	39	6	67	73	558	58	
James Monroe	40	5	46	51	581	36	
John Jay	41	5	84	89	886	189	
Paul Robeson HS Bus&Tech	42	5	29	34	267	15	
Theodore Roosevelt	43	5	181	186	986	196	
Adlai Stevenson	44	4	91	95	1487		121
Boys & Girls	45	4	63	67	761	104	
Eastern District	46	4	59	63	972	158	
Francis Lewis	47	4	56	60	611	104	
Franklin K. Lane	48	4	70	74	1112	133	
H.S. Telecommunications	49	4	44	48	269	69	
Hillcrest	50	4	64	68	1121	151	
James Madison	51	4	65	69	837	101	
Lafayette	52	4	73	77	804		48
Manhattan Center	53	4	63	67	372	32	
Martin L. King, Jr.	54	4	112	116	1133	412	
Ralph Mckee	55	4	19	23	385	63	
South Bronx	56	4	37	41	251	58	
William H. Taft	57	4	73	77	753	129	
Abraham Lincoln	58	3	62	65	558	81	
Andrew Jackson	59	3	51	54	638	189	
Bayside	60	3	47	50	710	92	
Beach Channel	61	3	94	97	715	117	
Benjamin N. Cardozo	62	3	53	56	755	126	
Bushwick	63	3	54	57	642	76	
Christopher Columbus	64	3	62	65	729	155	
F. D. Roosevelt	65	3	81	84	1027	191	
Flushing	66	3	54	57	661	122	
Forest Hills	67	3	61	64	867	137	
Fort Hamilton	68	3	24	27	787	122	
George Wingate	69	3	52	55	691	191	
Grover Cleveland	70	3	49	52	986	167	
H.S. For The Humanities	71	3	44	47	526	88	
Harry S. Truman	72	3	62	65	688		41
Herbert Lehman	73	3	50	53	548		45
Jamaica	74	3	36	39	572		34
John Bowne	75	3	67	70	973	183	
John F. Kennedy	76	3	73	76	1579		133
Long Island City	77	3	24	27	585	187	
Midwood	78	3	75	78	887	195	
New Utrecht	79	3	50	53	836		61
Prospect Heights	80	3	52	55	624	156	
Samuel J. Tilden	81	3	58	61	646	141	
Seward Park	82	3	70	73	1886	189	
Sheepshead Bay	83	3	64	67	777	85	
Springfield Garden	84	3	63	66	726	83	
Susan Wagner	85	3	34	37	672		86
Thomas Jefferson	86	3	48	51	556	72	
William C. Bryant	87	3	59	62	981	198	

	NUMBER OF FEEDER SCHOOLS				NUMBER OF PUPILS IN THE ENTERING CLASS		
	RANK	MINIMUM * 50 %	REMAINING 50 %	TOTAL	TOTAL	PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS * INCL. IN 50%	PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS * NOT INCL. IN 50%
Canarsie	88	2	36	38	567		68
Curtis	89	2	41	43	489	85	
Erasmus Hall	90	2	68	70	872	251	
John Adams	91	2	59	61	913		133
Martin Van Buren	92	2	46	48	498		38
New Dorp	93	2	39	41	889		131
Newtown	94	2	36	38	873		96
Port Richmond	95	2	45	47	665		43
Richmond Hill	96	2	51	53	498	93	
South Shore	97	2	51	53	1831		188
Tottenville	98	2	34	36	938		82
Far Rockaway	99	1	42	43	644		88
George Washington	100	1	39	40	1881		3

* All pupils coming from parochial schools were counted as entering from ONE feeder school regardless of the number of feeder parochial schools involved.

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